MOTHERS OF GREAT MEN



[*Mothers of Great Men.*—Frontispiece.

ST. AUGUSTINE AND MONICA.

THE MOTHERS OF GREAT MEN

BY

MRS. ELLIS

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND," ETC.

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PREFACE.

I HOPE in offering these sketches to the public that the suggestive nature of the subject itself, and the deep and earnest feeling it is calculated to excite, may awaken in other minds a desire, not only to trace out yet further these precious records of the past; but so to observe, as to bring into greater prominence that maternal influence which has helped to form the characters of the great men of the present day.

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MOTHERS OF GREAT MEN.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The subject to which the following pages are devoted is one that has long occupied the mind of the writer; and it loses none of its interest in consequence of having been recommended to her attention by those who are well qualified to judge of its importance and value. It is one thing, however, to feel that a subject is worthy of our highest efforts; it is another to render those efforts available for the practical benefit of others.

To expatiate upon the mother's influence in cultivating the germs of future greatness in the character of her child, would seem at once the most noble and the most inspiriting occupation in which a writer could be engaged. It would seem, also, to combine all that is most calculated to awaken the warmest sympathies of the human heart. Such, however, is not so much my object in the present undertaking, as to collect and exhibit a series of instances tending to illustrate that great fact in human experience—that the Author of our being has placed in the hands of

every mother a power with which she may direct and train her children, according to the deliberate purpose of her own heart.

In attempting to do this, some mothers may fail from ignorance of the most appropriate means. Others may fail from causes inevitable to their own position and circumstances. But whether a far greater number do not fail to instil the principles of greatness into the characters of their children, from the absence, on their part, of all definite purpose whatever, is a question of vast importance to those who take upon themselves the responsibility of maternal duty.

My intention in pursuing the subject here selected is chiefly to show what this strong purpose on the mother's part can actually do. In carrying out the plan of the work, it will not be necessary that any new facts should be brought before the attention of the reader. A selection from such as have been generally received will sufficiently answer the purpose contemplated. Neither does it follow that all the great men to whom allusion will be made shall have been *good* men; or that the mothers to whose influence their peculiar tone of character may be attributed shall have been women whose conduct in all respects could be held up for imitation. In some cases it may be necessary to show the sad consequences which ensue from the total absence of this influence, or the still sadder consequences of its abuse. Many instances also may have to be so slightly glanced at as scarcely to supply more than a bare statement of certain facts. But, whatever may be the mode of treatment adopted, the end kept steadily in view will be the same. The strong

purpose of the mother's heart, the example of her life, or the tone of feeling and sentiment conveyed through the channel which nature has supplied,—these will form the groundwork of whatever facts may be adduced illustrative of the mother's inalienable right over the formation of the character of her child.

It is scarcely necessary to say how forcibly the subject in hand would be likely to commend itself to an earnest mind; or how congenially it would appear to fall in with views already formed, and sentiments long cherished, as bearing directly upon the welfare and the happiness of mankind. On further consideration, however, many difficulties have presented themselves which, in justice, ought to be specified, in order that they may afford an apology for any shortcoming on the part of the writer with regard to the number, the extent, or the value of the instances adduced.

Amongst other difficulties not contemplated at first, the most important is one which arises simply out of the nature of the case. It is that, the mother's influence having generally ceased ostensibly before the character of the man has attained the dignity of greatness, there has been but little recorded, perhaps but little ever known, of the manner in which that influence was exercised in early youth. Greatness of character does not come at once. It requires the maturing of time, and the nurturing of circumstances. In how many cases has it been as little anticipated by the mother, as by the world at large, during the early stages of youth, or even manhood! Hence there has been no record kept of what the mother said or did—scarcely, it may be, any recollection of the manner in

which her power was exercised. That power may have surrounded her child with a kind of moral atmosphere in which he lived and breathed, and from which he derived his moral nourishment and strength, without his ever being conscious of the source or the sustenance of his own greatness.

Many indeed are the causes which operate against obtaining that knowledge which would be so valuable to us on these points. It is not the least among these, that many of the best women the world has ever known, and consequently many of the best mothers, have lived and died without ever finding a place in history. The finest elements of feminine goodness are retiring and unobtrusive in their nature; and those women who have exercised the deepest and the most salutary influence over others have generally been careful not to exhibit that influence to general observation. For this reason also there may have been no record kept; nor can we ever know in many cases, and those perhaps the most instructive, how much the zealous effort, the earnest prayer, or even the silent moral of the mother's life, may have done towards nourishing those seeds of greatness which her own high principles had early sown.

Under these difficulties, I have had to make my choice from two alternatives—either to draw up a long catalogue of slightly-recorded facts, or to dwell at greater length upon the few which appeared best calculated to illustrate the moral of the subject.

The latter mode of treatment has been adopted, not only because of the greater interest which it seems likely to afford, but because it will at the same time

admit of greater weight and force being attached to the mother's influence, from a clearer exhibition of its development in the peculiar character of her son.

According to this plan it will be necessary to omit many instances which are generally known and recognized; and perhaps to dwell upon some which may not on first consideration appear worthy of any lengthened comment, the character under discussion being defective in many of those qualities which are universally esteemed.

The influence of a good mother is not, unfortunately, always more powerful than that of a bad one. The purpose may be strong, even the maternal instinct may exist in all its force, where the standard of rectitude and virtue is fearfully low. There may be the ambition of partial affection, without the exalted aims which belong to right principle. These may be equally illustrative of the truths which are intended to be pointed out, though less agreeable to dwell upon than that firmer and more consistent purpose which grows out of a love that is purified by Christian faith, and adorned by Christian practice.

The task of the writer would unquestionably be more congenial, as well as more easy, were it possible to fill a volume with clearly-delineated pictures of good men who owed their bias of character, as well as its consistency and firmness in the path of virtue, to their mothers' influence and example. Over such details it would be delightful to dwell; while such pleasure would be enhanced by excluding all those in which the exercise of the maternal instinct is only to be contemplated in its mistaken zeal, or its terrible abuse.

For reasons already specified, however, such a volume is not likely to be the result even of the most careful investigation of the details of human experience. As well might we ask of the wide river that rolls into the ocean, what gave it the first bias or direction from its mountain spring, as seek to know, respecting good men in general, how their peculiar tone of character was imparted to them in early life.

There will no doubt be gleams of such recollections darting through the experience of most men, whether good or evil, at especial seasons, perhaps of joy, or sorrow. The feverish patient on his couch of pain may call upon his mother's name. The wounded soldier on the battle-field may long to feel again the touch of that soft hand that used to smooth his brow in childhood. The wanderer from the path of virtue, when he first begins to step aside, may think he sees his mother beckoning him to return into the ways of peace. He who has chosen the dry bread and the cold water of poverty for conscience' sake, rather than to feast in the tents of wickedness, may think his mother holds the cup, and deals the scanty loaf, with the sweet consolations of her love and approbation seasoning both. The man whose philanthropic plans have prospered, who returns to his fellow-workers in the good cause to announce the glad tidings of success, may say, within the secret of his heart, "How my mother would have rejoiced!" The Christian on his death-bed, having fought the good fight, and finished his course with joy, may think he sees his mother standing on the heavenly shore, the first to meet him with her welcome there. But amidst all the tenderest and

holiest associations which may thus bring back the mother's image—her voice, her looks, her words, her very heart—how little could be gleaned in most cases of what even the best of mothers had really said or done.

Hence we are compelled to accept the lesson of life as it comes to us—through the medium of evil as well as good; only bearing always in mind that if the power which nature has placed in the hands of the mother can be so influential in bringing into action the worst attributes of human character, it might be employed with tenfold efficacy in cherishing and maturing the best. It is impossible to believe that the beneficent Author of our being has not designed and adapted this peculiar agency for the holiest and most salutary purposes. To doubt this would be to question the harmony and perfection of His providential plans. To believe in—to hold by it with a living and a practical faith, is to place our hopes of social and religious progress upon a basis which nothing can shake, because nature and revelation are both engaged in its support.

II.

NATURAL EVIDENCE.

There is no strong and enduring influence ever exercised over human character which does not owe much of the secret of its power to some ally within the human heart. Nor does this acknowledgment militate against the supremacy of Divine agency, in imparting to feeling its peculiar tone, to motive its bias, and to hope its aim; because it is no less a part of the Divine plan, that the mind and the will of the Creator should be made known to His creatures through a distinct revelation, than that the heart of man, by means often mysterious and incomprehensible to us, should be prepared for receiving all that is most important to his welfare, both in this world and that which is to come. This ally by which the door is opened to conviction may appear to us no more than some passion, some affection, or some craving want. It may be some yearning after good, or some terror at the supposed approach of evil. It may utter the cry of weakness for help, or the prayer of the captive for deliverance. The ally within the heart is always ready, before that which is to control the destiny of the whole being can take possession. Hence it is, that influences, appa-

rently the most gentle and unobtrusive, are sometimes invested with a power which a less welcome agency could never wield. To the willing ally the softest whisper is more potent than the most imperative command from authority unrecognized, and undesired. Hence that influence which instils itself into the very elements of being, through the medium of a mother's love, is indebted for its tenacious and enduring hold to the spontaneous growth of an answering and corresponding principle implanted by nature in the very existence of the child.

The yielding of the plastic nature of youth beneath the mother's touch has furnished, through all ages, an apt and beautiful illustration of this fact. The softening of the temper, the bending of the will, the turning of the half-formed purpose—how often, and how justly, are these attributed to the reciprocal working together of those impulses of nature which belong to the mutual affection of the mother and the child!

It is an interesting and instructive feature presented by history, in the delineation of national characteristics, that, even in their false religions, this mutual relation, this reciprocal principle of motive and action, is seldom lost sight of. It is still more instructive to observe that the lower any nation or people are sunk in degradation, the less is maternal influence under any form regarded; while, on the other hand, the very superstitions of countries ranking higher in the scale of civilization, especially the mythological fables of Greece and Rome, abound in instances illustrative of the influence of the mother over the destiny of her son, it may be in guiding his steps into the path of glory, in

watching over him in the hour of danger, or inspiring in his breast that lofty courage without which his safety could not have been secured.

Even Jupiter himself, the father of gods and men, while owing the preservation of his life to the devices of his mother, affords but one amongst many similar instances to be found in these ingenious stories, which, however absurd and revolting to our ideas of moral excellence, have added to their merit in filling the world with poetical images, that of being for the most part true to this first and deepest principle in human nature, the watchful care of the mother, and her not unfrequent power over the destiny of her offspring.

It is not less illustrative of this truth, that so many of the calamities which occur in this fabulous world are also attributed to the intervention of female agency, most frequently exercised on the part of the mother. The sister arts of painting and sculpture have lent their aid to immortalize the impress of this truth. That symbol of all sorrow, represented with such inimitable pathos as the weeping Niobe vainly endeavouring to shield her youngest child from the fatal arrows by which her whole family are struck down, would never have subjected herself to this laceration of the heart, but for an insult offered on her part to the dignity of a rival mother.

Nor is it in the purely fabulous alone that we recognize the frequent recurrence of this truth—not the less a truth that we find it so often associated with falsehood. As the passions so forcibly portrayed in these fables are all human, so are the principles and motives which link the heathen divinities together,

sending them forth to mingle, according to their different missions, in the affairs of men, and uniting them again as one family in their Olympian home.

No sooner are the affairs of this lower world supposed to be committed to the valour or the discretion of a set of beings, half gods, half men, than the mother's affection and influence are again introduced, and made to supply some of the most beautiful and touching passages of epic verse. Achilles, not otherwise the tenderest or the most easily subdued amongst the Grecian warriors, would have been wanting in the requisites of poetic interest, had not his mother so often left the solitudes of her ocean home to watch over his fate in battle, and to intercede with the divinely-gifted powers on his behalf. From her burning thirst for the immortality of her offspring, it would seem that this fabled mother loved the glory of her children better than their lives. But, again, she is not more poetically than strictly true to the maternal instinct, which in the immediate prospect of personal danger to her son, inspires the determined purpose of effecting his security regardless of all other consequences.

Such then, is that truth in fiction which serves, scarcely in a less degree than truth in fact, to prove that, even during this confused and mythic period of human history, there was the same general recognition as there is now of the mutual relation between the affectionate solicitude of the mother and the susceptibility of the child, and consequently, of the deeply influential power which attaches to the earnest and consistent purpose of the mother's heart.

It is needless to bring forward here those numerous instances of a similar nature by which ancient history is embellished, and which have now become familiar as household words to all educated youth. But when the memorable expression of the Roman matron is recorded, it is not perhaps sufficiently borne in mind that the noble patriotism of the Gracchi must have owed much of its fervent aspirations after right and justice, as well as its indignation against oppression and wrong, to the same mother who, pointing to her children, exclaimed, "These are all the jewels of which I have to boast." A mother whose chief attribute was tenderness might have uttered these words. A mother whose devotion was expended, as such devotion too often is, upon mere infancy, to cherish and love: such a mother might have pointed to her children as the richest treasures which the world possessed for her. But to grow up to maturity with a bold and steady front set fairly in the direction of right—with a courage not only to dare, but actually to do, that which others are content to whisper should be done—with an ambition that covets power only for the sake of using it well, and a self-sacrifice that prefers death to the desertion of a good cause—these are qualities which demand far other sustenance than that which is required for the mere growing up to maturity in health. And such would seem to have been the noble purpose of this Roman mother, for we read of no yielding on her part, but rather a cheering onward in the same course, even when beset with difficulty and danger to her sons, and promising no issue but a patriotic death.

As in all religions, whether true or false, where there is a deep moral, though it may not always be a pure one, so in all political and social institutions, where there is any recognition of a moral standard, there the mother's influence has ever been openly acknowledged. The unsparing severity of Spartan law, would seem, on cursory inspection, to have no connection except with the direct welfare of the State. But how was this welfare to be ensured? By engrafting upon character the stern necessity of self-immolation for the public good. And how was this to be fully and consistently effected, but by enlisting the mothers of the Spartan youth on the side of all which appeared, to this wonderful people, not only most politic, but also most glorious.

While the Spartans professed to despise the embellishments of art, and the luxuries of refined society, it is curious to observe how sensible they were of the power of this subtile secret, which so many great warriors, great statesmen, and even great philosophers have overlooked. The Spartans, with a truer wisdom, recognized the fact, that if their youth were to be raised above the temptation of personal indulgence, and nerved for that great victory which comprehends the subjugation of self, their mothers must not only understand and feel the same necessities of their true citizenship, but must learn to practise the same austerities in the same school of patience and uncomplaining endurance. Thus they were early initiated into exercises more befitting the soldier than the matron; and hence they acquired the habit of directing all the instincts of maternal love, not to the mere sus-

tenance of life, but to that patriotism without which they believed life to have no glory, ambition no object, and affection no reward.

It would seem to be the province of modern investigation to strip many an ancient hero of those graces and embellishments of character with which poetry and romance had combined to adorn him. Even Coriolanus, while robbed of much of the moral grandeur with which Shakespeare, especially, once taught us to associate his name, loses nothing of that true evidence of nature, according to which we read and ever shall read, his history, as yielding, when all other means had been tried in vain, to the pleadings of his wife, and the almost commanding influence of his mother. Whatever allowance may have to be made for conflicting testimony and discordant dates, nothing can ever shake our faith in this one outstanding evidence of truth in fiction. Shakespeare knew well—no one could know better—exactly how to mark those shades of difference which distinguish the appeals of the mother and the wife.

"My wife comes foremost."

This was perfectly natural, as claiming the relationship of equality. But when the mother approaches in suppliant attitude, a kind of awe steals over the soul of the haughty rebel, and he exclaims—

"My mother bows;
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod:"—

And again, when, by the entreaties of his wife he is but half subdued, his mother takes up the argument,

and, pointing the bitterest comments upon his name and character, should he persist, she then turns his thoughts towards herself, mingling the recollections of youth and childhood with her remonstrances; at length she kneels, declaring that appeal shall be her last, and if that should fail—

> "So will we home to Rome,
> And die among our neighbours."

Such is her conclusion, for there is no wavering on her part, no yielding of purpose, no smoothing of language in order to conciliate. She is a Roman mother, and must be true to Rome. Such, then, is the overwhelming power of this stern principle of duty that recognizing, even in his manhood, the same maternal influence as that to which his thoughts have been recalled, the hero yields at last, though conscious of the fearful consequences to himself, in perfect agony of soul exclaiming—

> "Mother, mother!—
> What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
> The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
> They laugh at. O my mother, mother, oh!
> You have won a happy victory for Rome;
> But, for your son——"

Nor, after that great change had passed over the understandings and convictions of mankind, by which the vital truths of Christianity were brought to light, was this strong tendency to adhere to the first principles of nature lost sight of. It revived, indeed, under a new form, and the attraction was rendered only the more alluring, because that form, by the

transmuting power of affection, could so easily be made to appear at once the loveliest, and the most intimately associated with our human wants, and with all that is tenderest and dearest in human joys and sorrows.

Here, then, as well as in the earlier systems of idolatry, amidst error and confusion, and the substitution of man's imaginings for truth, we may still trace out that deeply-implanted feeling which clings to the mother, with all the tenacious power of natural instinct, and will not even accept a divinely-instituted revelation without investing the maternal character with superhuman attributes.

The singleness of idea and conception with which, through endless confusion arising out of this mistake, the character of the mother is maintained, is without doubt the mildest and the least revolting aspect under which we can view this grievous error. It is interesting also to observe how little of terror or of retributive justice is assigned to the influence of the mother of Jesus. Compassionate love would seem to be her leading characteristic; and a purity so exalted, that vice shrinks abashed before her imaginary presence, and only dares to ask her pity and forgiveness, because it is from maternal tenderness that these feelings most readily and most profusely flow. In want, in sorrow, in utter brokenness of spirit, in shame and abasement, not daring to look higher, the poor misguided suppliant, ignorant or regardless of the real words of everlasting life, is fain to substitute a gospel of his own; and, because he finds its tenderest passages transcribed within his bleeding heart, refuses to

accept, in its full purport, that message of salvation by which its deepest wounds might be healed.

The same oneness of idea, the same simple adherence to the maternal character, is traceable throughout those innumerable works of art by which the image of the Virgin has been so extensively multiplied. Neither in painting nor sculpture has the design embraced anything beyond this. The mother of Jesus might in almost all these instances have been the mother of a mere peasant-boy. There is no assumption of power on her part; not even the dim foreshadowing of a more than human majesty. A quiet mother, smiling in simple tenderness upon her child, is all that has ever been attempted by art in representing the Virgin Mary under her maternal character. As such we behold her, and no more; even when her matronly brow has been invested with a beauty which owed its unrivalled charm to the highest conceptions of genius, combined with the most cultivated powers of execution, the beauty and the grace have still been simply human; and it is chiefly because the love and the tenderness with which they are associated are also human—most intimately and closely human in the influence over heart and life and character, that they have come, by a mistaken reverence, to be regarded as divine.

So much for the strong tendency of nature, even when represented under fictitious forms, or struggling amidst the darkness and the errors of superstition; yet all affording evidence of the same deep-rooted and inalienable power which the mother may or may not employ in moulding and influencing the life and ac-

tions of her child. With this slight glance at what human nature has ever been prone to believe in, as one of the first and most enduring foundations of character and conduct, we turn to instances of authenticated fact, in which the mother's instrumentality may be distinctly recognized.

III.

THE MOTHER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

THE men who are most frequently called great, in the popular sense of the word, are those who, under the concurring circumstances of time, place, and individual character, rise up before their fellow-men to fill a position of distinction; thus appearing to human observation not only to stand prominently forward, but also to stand higher than other men.

There is, however, a nobler application of the word great. It is where, under the same concurring circumstances, a man rises into a position of usefulness, as well as prominence; where, by his energy, his bravery, his discretion, or by any other qualifications, either natural or acquired, he is able to do much for his fellow-men; where all eyes are directed towards him, and towards the functions he is thus enabled to fulfil better than other men; and where even his most private and lowly virtues stand forth as landmarks to encourage all who tread the ways of life. Such men are truly great, whatever their peculiar position or office in the world may be. But they are also rare, so rare that it will be necessary to accept the word great

in both these senses, in order to follow out the subject to any definite purpose.

When we speak of a great man, it is always necessary to take into account concurring circumstances. Indeed one of the attributes, or rather one of the elementary parts of greatness may be said to consist in a certain power to perceive and lay hold of circumstances, so as best to turn them to account. There may be every other requisite for greatness without this; and a person so endowed, yet so deficient, would be likely to pass from the cradle to the grave without ever attaining to anything which his fellow-men would recognize as great. Happily for some of the best of great men, this application of circumstances to their individual character, or rather their character to circumstances, has been done for them by the arrangements of a kind Providence, without any definite design on their part; only they have not been deficient in perception or appreciation of the fitness of circumstances to their own case, or they never could have been great.

In looking abroad upon the world, for the purpose of studying this plan of adaptation, we see sometimes that circumstances have been waiting for the man, before the time of his appearance; and at others that the man has been long preparing and making ready for the circumstances, though it may have been unconsciously to himself. Luther was a remarkable instance of the former; of the latter we have our own Cromwell. The world has had many waiting seasons. Different countries, and even separate institutions, have occasionally their waiting times; when all things

are ready, except the one man who is to act for all. While, on the other hand, though far more seldom, we are struck with the spectacle of a being so endowed that, had he lived in some other time or place, or been surrounded by different circumstances, we think he might have accomplished wonders, both for himself and others. As it is, he seems like a star that has lost its sphere; he is out of harmony with surrounding things, and consequently his life is without utility, his character without beauty; and, in all probability, he is himself without happiness.

In the history of the Christian Church, this preparation of circumstances for the man, and of the man for the circumstances, has seldom been more striking than in the case of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in Africa. Milner, in describing the state of the Christian world at this time, speaks of it as one of peculiar darkness and superstition: "Notwithstanding the spread of nominal Christianity, under Christian emperors, such were the evils and abuses which had crept into the Churches towards the end of the third century, and such the dissensions by which the different religious communities were separated, that it would scarcely have been unreasonable to apprehend a total relapse into Paganism, had not a holier life and a truer worship been restored by a fresh effusion of the Spirit of God."

At this very time a man was preparing for the great work of upholding a purer standard of Christian faith and fellowship; and he was preparing in a somewhat remarkable manner. He was first to experience all the degradation, the bitterness, and the anguish of

sin. He was to endure all the struggles of a nature peculiarly sensuous and prone to indulgence; and he was to illustrate in his own person the mighty power of conversion from all which the heart and the eye delight in as sinful, or even dangerous, to the soul, to a state of obedient self-renunciation and true holiness.

Nor was the chief instrument employed in this preparation—humanly speaking—less remarkable than the condition of the man himself. A woman in the ordinary walks of life, boasting no superior intellectual qualifications, either natural or acquired, yet evidently endowed with that high moral dignity and sweetness, which, when allied, as in her case, to Christian humility and zeal, has more influence in leading and persuading others than the most splendid attainments of a mere intellectual order; this woman, by her prayers and her tears, perhaps more than all by her own most exemplary life, was so to work upon the heart and the affections of her son, that he should be scarcely less subdued by her gentleness, than by the terrors of his own awakened conscience.

The acquaintance which we enjoy the privilege of making with Monica, the mother of Augustine, is chiefly through his own well-known "Confessions," a work which is spoken of by Dr. Pusey as having been translated again and again into all European languages, and loved in all. It is true, we have no connected account of Monica's experience or character previous to her marriage with Patricius, who was a pagan; only here and there we find scattered allusions to events in her early life, which it is easy to understand how she might use to enforce her own lessons

upon her child. It appears that Monica was one of a Christian household, and it is a striking fact that she attributed much of the good discipline from which she had profited in early youth to a faithful female servant, "old and decrepit," who had been long in the family, having carried her father when he was a child; and who, for that reason, and her great age, and excellent conversation, had remained a member of the same household, much respected by the parents. Over the younger branches of the family this woman appears to have exercised a strict but wholesome rule, not unfrequently checking what she regarded as a tendency to excess, even in innocent indulgence; and on one occasion rebuking the young Monica so sharply that, although stung to the quick by the bitterness of the reproof, she saw in a moment the dangerous nature of her fault, and "instantly condemned and forsook it."

There would seem throughout to have been this great difference betwixt Monica and her son, that she was self-disciplined in a remarkable degree, and therefore strong to renounce whatever she believed it her duty to give up; while his tendency appears to have been to cherish to the very last those vices which seemed to require that his being should be crushed before he could resign them. From his pagan father perhaps the son inherited this weakness, for certainly there is nothing in the record he has left of his mother's character and habits bearing, in this respect, any resemblance to his own.

In the married life of this admirable woman we find the same virtue of self-government most clearly

manifested; for, in addition to other wrongs, perhaps even more difficult to bear with patience, it seems that she was at times subjected to the personal vio lence of a choleric husband. "Yet had it never been heard, nor by any token perceived, that Patricius had beaten his wife." And to those gossips who would fain have meddled with these, her own private matters, and were curious to know how such a temper as her husband's could be calmly borne, she had this judicious answer, "that she had learned not to resist an angry husband, not in deed only, but even in words. Only when he was smooth and tranquil, and in a temper to receive it, she would give an account of her actions, if haply he had over-hastily taken offence." In the same manner when her mother-in-law had been, by the whisperings of evil servants, incensed against her, "she so overcame, by observance and persevering endurance, and meekness, that in the end these whispering tongues were silenced," and the two women lived together "with a remarkable sweetness of mutual kindness."

Indeed, such a peace-maker was Monica, even in social life, that when in the course of such conversation as offended feeling sometimes dictates, or when, "hearing on both sides most bitter things, such as indigested choler uses to break out into, before a present friend against an absent enemy; she never would disclose aught unto the other, except what might tend to their reconcilement." Well might her son, when commenting upon these excellences of his mother's character, and the lessons which, through them, he had himself been taught, exclaim, "Such was she, Thyself, O God, her most inward instructor,

teaching her in the school of the heart." . . . "Finally, her own husband, towards the end of his earthly life, did she gain unto Thee. She was also the servant of Thy servants. Whosoever of them knew her, did, in her, much praise and honour Thee; for that, through the witness of the fruits of a holy conversation, they perceived Thy presence in her heart. Of all of us having received the grace of Thy baptism, did she so take care, as though she had been mother of us all; so served s, as if she had been child to us all."

In connection with these raits of character, the son further confesses of his mother, that her endowments, and the fervour of her mind towards divine things, he had before perceived through daily intercourse; yet, in discussing a matter of no small moment, her mind appeared to him of so high an order as that nothing could be more adapted to the study of true wisdom. And in speaking of her ardent love of the Divine Scriptures, he records an answer of hers as confirming his opinion of the superiority of her mind. In discussing the question of what constitutes true happiness, Monica observed: "If a man desires what is good, and has it, he is happy; if evil, though he have it, he is wretched."

It is worthy of observation here, as will often have to be pointed out in the course of this work, how much was done by the *respect* which the mother's mind and character excited in her son. Had her habitual conversation betrayed weakness of intellect, or even an absence of that method and system of thought which, as a scholar and a rhetorician, he must have

been well able to appreciate, there could never have been in his intercourse with his mother that charm, over which he lingers as if the most beautiful picture of his whole life had been that which embraced her character, and her affection for himself.

In his own nature Augustine was eminently capable of this moral and intellectual beauty, for we cannot call it less, seeing that harmony is beauty. Indeed his own intense perception and love of beauty, too scrupulously regarded by him as a snare, is strikingly manifested in those portions of his "Confessions" where he calls up the remembrance of the manner in which he considers himself to have been betrayed by his senses into sin. As if the very perception of the glory and delight which God has scattered throughout His great universe was not the legitimate office of these senses, that so they might be ever reaping rich harvests of enjoyment, wherewith to fill the garners of the heart with gratitude, and hope, and love.

"There remains," he says, on one occasion, "the pleasure of these eyes of my flesh, on which to make my confessions, and so to conclude the temptations of the lusts of the flesh, which yet assail me, groaning earnestly, and desiring to be clothed upon with my home from heaven. The eyes love fair and varied forms, and soft and bright colours. And these affect me, waking, the whole day; nor is any rest given me from them, as there is from musical, sometimes in silence from all voices. For this queen of colours, the light, bathing all which we behold, wherever I am through the day, gliding by me in varied forms, soothes me when engaged in other things, and not observing;

and so strongly doth it entwine itself that, if it be suddenly withdrawn, it is with longing sought for; and, if absent long, saddeneth the mind."

But the mother of Augustine was destined to know a sorrow deeper perhaps than any which belonged to her married life; and had to wait with a patient endurance, such as none but the believing experience, while watching the evil courses, and sometimes the utter abandonment to licentious pleasure, in which her son so long persisted. She was, however, not only a believing, but a prayerful, and consequently a *hopeful* mother. From the first she seems to have been desirous of dedicating her child to God; and on one occasion, when Augustine, while yet a boy, was suffering under severe and dangerous illness, and himself begged that the rite of baptism might be administered to him, his mother, "always travailing in birth for his eternal salvation," hastened to comply with his desires; but, notwithstanding the ardour of her feelings, recollecting that this desire might be only the impulse of an anxious moment, and fearing that a return to ife and its temptations might be attended with a yet more dangerous relapse into sin, the baptism was deferred, and the mother's fears were but too soon confirmed.

As a boy, Augustine says of himself, "I had already heard of an eternal life, promised us through the humility of the Lord our God stooping to our pride;" and throughout all the dubious ways in which he sought for satisfaction or delight, he was pursued by something like a phantom of happiness, dimly apprehended; never really found. To a nature like his, so

capable of enjoyment, yet so impossible to satisfy with inferior things, it seemed but a necessary consequence of his false estimate of good, that he should experience the continual torture of an insatiable want, which neither the pleasures in which he indulged, nor the higher pursuits of his intellectual nature, could sufficiently allay. "I sought," he says, "for pleasures, sublimities, truths, and fell headlong into sorrows, confusions, errors." And thus "I wandered further from Thee into more proud dejectedness, and a restless weariness."

Of his father, Augustine speaks as "but a poor freeman of Thagaste," his native place, in Africa. Both parents, however, were equally anxious that their son should enjoy the advantages of a superior education; and, in the hope of being able to send him to Carthage, where he might pursue with greater facility the studies in which he already excelled, they so husbanded their means that in his sixteenth year this journey was accomplished, after the youth had worse than wasted a considerable amount of intervening time at home. Indeed, such was the perversion of his talents and affections at this time, and such the degradation into which through idleness and evil associates he was betrayed, that he not only plunged into most of the vices incident to youth, but even learned to boast of being more abandoned than he really was.

In this state he arrived at Carthage, in the year 371. Here the arts of the Forum engaged his ambition. He studied books of eloquence, and in the course of his reading met with the "Hortensius" of Cicero—a work which effected an extraordinary change

in his views and feelings. Purer and more exalted aims began to awaken in his mind, along with a vehement desire to seek for wisdom wherever it might be found. One thing startled him: that in the midst of so much good, and in a work so capable of rousing him to a loftier and a nobler ambition, he found not the name of Christ—that name which his mother had so studiously taught him to reverence. Struck with this want, he determined to apply his mind to the study of the Holy Scriptures, to see what they actually were, and whether he could find in them that for which his soul was still panting with unsatisfied desire. But the Scriptures appeared to him unworthy to be compared with Cicero, and his "swelling pride shrank from their lowliness." He therefore applied himself again to the study of philosophy in the society of men whose "mouths were snares," who continually cried out "*Truth, truth,*" yet failed to show, with all their learning and attainments, the way of life.

In these and similar pursuits Augustine was engaged until his nineteenth year, maintained, as he states, at his mother's expense, his father having died two years before. Nothing, however, in the high objects to which he was aspiring, or, on the other hand, in the depths to which he sank, seems to have alienated his tenderest regards from his mother. "Thy faithful one," as he calls her, "weeping to Thee for me, more than mothers weep the bodily death of their children; for she discovered the death wherein I lay, and Thou despisedst not her tears when, streaming down, they watered the ground in every place where she prayed."

After these expressions, the son records a dream by which his mother was comforted, so much so that she allowed him still to live with her, and to eat at the same table in the house, which she had begun to shrink from, abhorring so much the errors and the vices of his blasphemous career. It might be easy to charge the good Monica with superstition, in attaching importance to this dream, but to her it mattered little what others thought of it. To her it availed much that, in the midst of her heavy grief, and possibly it was on some occasion when she had wept herself to sleep, there appeared advancing towards her a shining youth, with words of comforting assurance respecting him for whom she wept and prayed. She was herself standing on a bridge of safety,—meet emblem of that faith on which she stood secure amidst all the storms of persecution, and the perils of her widowed lot,—and the assurance which the shining messenger imparted was, that "where she was, there should her son be also." In another moment she looked, and beheld him standing by her side.

Believingly the mother accepted the vision as graciously permitted for the strengthening of her hope and the solace of her grief, and joyfully she told it to her son. He, not caring, indeed not wishing, that the dream should bear the interpretation which consoled his mother's heart, would more willingly have construed it to mean that his mother should eventually be brought over to think with him. But Monica was not a woman to be so beguiled. Strong in her faith, she retorted instantly upon him for this false construction of the words, showing him that it was he

who was to be with her. In this confidence she rested, believing still, although long years had yet to be endured before the fulfilment of that blessed vision: "All which time that chaste and sober widow, now more cheered with hope, yet no whit relaxing in her weeping and mourning, ceased not at all times to bewail my case unto Thee."

Such, and so faint to human understanding, were the grounds of confidence in which this anxious mother sought and found her consolation. But they were much to her; and even amidst adverse, and at times humiliating circumstances, she only laid hold of them the more firmly, and bound them the more thankfully to her heart. We have next to behold her pleading with others on behalf of her child—pleading with good men for a wicked son! There are mothers who can enter into this, and who know but too feelingly how much harder it is to plead with man than with God. Yet everything must be tried. Monica knew that to weep and to pray was not all. She must leave no stone unturned; so she applied to a certain Bishop, well esteemed in the Church, as a man deeply versed in that knowledge which she thought might possibly be made instrumental in rescuing her son from the false philosophy and the heresies which possessed his mind. The Bishop, as might be supposed, was occupied about weightier matters. Perhaps he thought the mother a little importunate, or that his own superior talents and attainments would be wasted upon a mere boy, "puffed up with the novelty of captious questions." He, consequently, not only declined at that time to meddle in the matter himself,

but advised the mother to let her son alone for awhile, but still to pray to God for him, trusting that he would, ere long, perceive and renounce his own errors.

The mother *had* prayed; she *had* let her son alone; she *had* trusted. Was there, then, no help to be obtained from mortal man? She urged the Bishop yet again; she could not be refused. Her entreaties were accompanied with many tears. Touched by the earnestness of her importunity, the Bishop at last exclaimed, "Go thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is impossible that the son of these tears should perish!"—which answer, though uttered with some little impatience, the mother accepted as if it had been a voice from heaven.

Augustine seems to have been much addicted to close and intimate companionship with young men of similar pursuits with himself, and in such friendships his ardent affections found delight. The first amongst many, to whom he refers with mingled tenderness and respect, was Nebridius, "a youth singularly good, and of a holy fear." He was the companion of his boyhood, born in the same place. "I had made one friend," he says, in speaking of him, "only too dear to me from a community of pursuits, and, like myself, in the fresh opening flower of youth. I had warped him to those superstitious and pernicious fables for which my mother bewailed me. With me he now erred in mind, nor could my soul be without him. But behold! Thou wert close upon the steps of Thy fugitives—Thou tookest that man out of this life, when he had scarcely filled up one whole year of my

friendship—sweet to me, above all sweetness of that my life."

The conversion of this friend was singular—scarcely to be recognized as such, according to our modes of judging; yet it seems quite possible that the efficacy attributed to the rite of baptism, unconsciously received, might really exist in the impression made upon the mind of the youth, by being told that baptism had actually been administered to him while lying in a state of insensibility. Like his friend Augustine, he might have previously known and deplored the errors into which both had plunged; he might have been alarmed at the near prospect of death; and scarcely less alarmed when, on coming back to life, he found himself baptized as a Christian. Augustine himself so touchingly describes the change which passed upon his friend, and the evidences of that change, which he adduces, are so simple, yet so deep in their meaning, that we are not solicitous to inquire further into the direct means by which the change was wrought.

This friend, he says, 'lay sick of a fever, unconscious, and apparently nigh unto death. In this state he was baptized, unknowing; myself, meanwhile, little regarding, and presuming that his soul would retain rather what it received from me, than what was wrought during his unconsciousness. But it proved far otherwise, for he was refreshed and restored. Forthwith, as soon as I could speak to him,—and that was as soon as he was able, for I never left him, and we hung but too much upon each other,—I essayed to jest with him, as though he would jest with me,

at that baptism which he now understood that he had received. But he so shrunk from me as from an enemy; and with a wonderful and sudden freedom, bade me, as I would continue his friend, to forbear such language to him. I, all astonished and amazed, suppressed my emotions until he should grow well enough for me to deal with him as I would. But he was taken away from my madness. A few days after, in my absence, he was attacked again with fever, and so departed."

After Augustine's return to Carthage, in the year 380, fearing that the course pursued by her son would be no happier than before, yet ever anxious to be near him, Monica determined upon following him to that city, to share his lot, whatever it might be. She found him still the same—ambitious, eager, restless, unsatisfied; so much so, that he was willing to resort to almost any means, however vain or superstitious, which might promise even the least alleviation of his soul's malady. "An old wise man, renowned for his skill in physic," says Augustine, "had, with his own proconsular hand, placed the Agonistic garland upon my distempered head." Yet all to no purpose: the malady remained the same.

Tired or disgusted with the absurdities of the Manichæan system, to which he had long adhered, Augustine began to look elsewhere for any glimpse of truth which his soul might comprehend. The followers of this heresy, apprehensive of his desertion, persuaded him to wait until the all-accomplished Faustus should come to Carthage. He was a man of reputed capacity and wisdom in those entangled points

upon which Augustine was continually asking questions, which none of the sect then present in Carthage were able to solve. Faustus at length arrived. His address, his facility of expression, the pathos and propriety of his language, were all that could have been desired. But the sick heart was surfeited; the weary spirit found no refreshment. All the fallacies of this system now became more apparent; its absurdities more revolting. Was there nothing which the aspiring mind could grasp and hold by as a certain truth?

Augustine had been for some time a teacher of rhetoric, and pursued his vocation with considerable celebrity. He had returned to his native place in this capacity; and here his mother had been warmly congratulated upon the talents and success of her son. She must have been a woman who could well appreciate the value of his high reputation, and deeply feel that natural and genuine pleasure which the praises bestowed upon her son were calculated to excite. But her heart was heavy with other thoughts, and inwardly she still mourned over his heresy and his misconduct. And scarcely less did he mourn too, though blindly obstinate in refusing to bend his will to his already deepening convictions.

On the death of his friend Nebridius, Augustine for awhile abandoned himself to the violence of his grief. But a nature so ardent and affectionate soon found solace in other attachments: and he seems to have had the power at all times to draw closely around him those whose society helped to beguile him of the secret disquietude which destroyed his peace. His

own description of this companionship is, that the friends loved to "talk and jest together; to do kind offices by turns; to read together honied books; to play the fool, or be earnest together; to dissent at times without discontent, as a man might with his own self; and even with the seldomness of these dissentings to season their more frequent consentings; sometimes to teach, and sometimes to learn; to long for the absent with impatience, and welcome the coming with joy. These and the like expressions, proceeding out of the hearts of those that loved and were loved again, by the countenance, the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand pleasing gestures, were so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of many to make but one." This admirable description he sums up by saying, "This it is that is loved in friends. Hence that mourning if one die, and darkenings of sorrows; that steeping of the heart in tears, all sweetness being turned to bitterness."

In noticing the simple, natural, and even beautiful features of this companionship, it is impossible not to be struck with the refinement, as well as the tenderness, by which it seems to have been held together; nor is it unreasonable or unfair to suppose that the mother of Augustine must have had her full share in keeping up this tone of mind and feeling.

Amongst his other pursuits, many of which were of a refined and somewhat elevated nature, Augustine devoted himself especially at this time to a philosophical study of the *beautiful;* and from deep meditations upon this theme, there sprang up from his inmost heart considerations which prompted him to write a

book, or more than one, on the *Fair and fit.* These works were dedicated to a celebrated orator in Rome. Indeed, his ambition was now tending towards Rome, not only as a more distinguished theatre for the exercise and cultivation of his powers of eloquence, but also because he heard that students in that city enjoyed many advantages which he found it impossible to command in Carthage.

From his watchful mother Augustine studiously concealed the project of this journey, even deceiving her by falsehood, and escaping from her under the pretext of escorting some friends to the ship in which he was intending himself to sail. In all this, there could appear nothing but deepening sorrow for the afflicted mother, who had followed her son as far as an oratory near the place of embarkation, where she spent the night, and found herself on the following morning, not only deceived, but deserted. "Accusing the treachery and hard-heartedness" of her son, she betook herself again to prayer on his behalf, and then went back to her wonted place, and he to Rome.

But the day was not far distant when the mother would learn to bless the unseen hand which had led her son away, directing his wandering feet to where they should find rest and safety. He was "received in Rome," as he relates, "with the scourge of bodily sickness," and lay for some time at the gates of death. Of this his mother remained ignorant, though still in absence praying for him. The effect of this illness seems to have been so far favourable, as it left him more disposed to examine the Scriptures with less of prejudice and contempt than formerly. But he still

cavilled and disputed upon many points of doctrine, and with respect to the nature and office of Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer, he appears to have remained in gross darkness. Nor had he any friend or instructor in Rome who could assist him in finding out the truth. In the society of the young men of that city he was disappointed. To laxity of morals on some points, there is no doubt he could be sufficiently lenient; but in the habits of these young men he discovered something approaching to systematic dishonesty, and for vices of this kind he had no toleration. Some unexpected difficulties, too, stood in the way of his profession. He therefore gladly availed himself of the choice of an appointment as professor of rhetoric in a distant city. Through the interest of his friends, this honour was bestowed upon him, and he set out under these favourable auspices to make his future abode at Milan.

Here Augustine introduced himself to Ambrose, the good Bishop, who, he says, received him as a father, though generally too much occupied with the weightier affairs of his bishopric to be accessible to questions of a more personal and individual nature. Thenceforth, however, Augustine began to love him; and he listened diligently to him preaching to the people, ever hanging attentively upon his words: but it was more as an admirer than a believer, for though delighted with the sweetness of the discourse, he was careless of the matter.

But the faithful Monica soon followed her son again, even so far as Milan; "resolute," as he says, "through piety, following me over sea and land, in all

dangers confiding in Thee. For in perils of the sea, she comforted even the very mariners, assuring them of a safe arrival, because Thou hadst, by a dream, assured her thereof. She found me in grievous peril, through despair of ever finding truth." But when he told her that he was no longer a Manichee, though not yet a true Christian, she exhibited no excess of joy, as at some unexpected happiness, but rather evinced by her behaviour how her confidence was only deepened, her assurance made more sure, that He who had promised the whole would one day grant what yet remained.

Throughout the whole of this simple narrative, there is one characteristic with which it is scarcely possible not to be deeply impressed. It is the perfect *womanhood* of Augustine's mother; and most probably no other kind of character could have exercised the same influence over him; for though he failed to walk in the path which she so studiously pointed out, and even preferred the gratification of his own inclinations to her peace of mind, his constant reference to her, and the vague sort of efficacy which he seems always to have in some way attached to her prayers, evince a feeling on his part, like that of one who is conscious of being watched over by some guardian power who claims both love and reverence. Finding that her son had been led to some extent out of the darkness of error by the preaching of Ambrose, Monica "loved that man as an angel of God," because she knew that by him her son had been brought thus far. How perfectly womanlike is this! to love—almost to adore—to kiss the feet of him who brings back into the fold her wandering lamb!

In another picture of his mother, which Augustine paints with the hand of no mean artist, we again recognize the womanly features of her most lovely character; and it is singular that no praises, even of so touching and eloquent a writer, could have placed this character before us in so attractive a light as these simple words, which are not the less instructive as being illustrative of the habits of long past times, when the darkness which enveloped all human institutions, and even the Church itself, was such as to leave us little beyond the most prominent facts of history, and these but rarely invested with any considerable amount of human interest.

It seems to have been a custom at that time in the African Churches, for pious persons to bring offerings of bread and wine to the tombs of the martyrs or eminent saints, there to pray, and afterwards to partake of the food, or more frequently to make distribution of it amongst the poor. Fearing that this custom might lead to some idolatrous notion that the food was thereby sanctified, or that it might be made an excuse for feasting and disorder, it had been discountenanced in other churches; and when Monica, after her arrival in Milan, brought certain cakes and bread and wine for this purpose, she was forbidden by the doorkeeper to enter. So soon, however, as she knew that this prohibition was from the Bishop himself, she piously and obediently conformed to his wishes, her son wondering at the readiness with which she laid aside a practice which to her had been not only innocent but most grateful and congenial. "For," to use his own words, "wine-bibbing did not

lay siege to her spirit, nor did love of wine provoke her to hatred of the truth, as it doth too many. But she, when she had brought her basket with the accustomed festival-food, to be but tasted by herself, and then given away, never joined therewith more than one small cup of wine, diluted according to her own abstemious habits, which for courtesy she would taste. So soon as she found this custom to be forbidden by Ambrose, that famous preacher and most pious prelate, even to those who would use it soberly, lest so an occasion of excess might be given to the drunken, and lest these solemnities should too much resemble the superstition of the Gentiles, she most willingly forbore it; and instead of a basket filled with fruits of the earth, she learned to bring to the churches of the martyrs a breast filled with more purified petitions, and to give what she could to the poor. But yet it seems to me, and so thinks my heart, that perhaps she would not so readily have yielded to the cutting off of this custom, had it been forbidden by another whom she loved not as Ambrose, whom, for my salvation, she loved most entirely; and he her again, for her most religious conversation, her good works," and that, "so fervent in spirit, she was constant at church; so that, when he saw me, he often burst forth in her praises, congratulating me that I had such a mother; not knowing what a son she had in me, who doubted of all these things, and imagined the way of life could not be found out."

Augustine was now passing from youth to manhood, "still greedy," as he describes his state, "of enjoying present things, which passed away and wasted his

soul; while he said to himself, "Tomorrow I shall find it!" He had made many friends; and amongst these Alypius, a young man from his native town in Africa, and once his pupil in rhetoric, seems to have been attached to him by a close and tender intimacy. Augustine, too, had risen in fame and honour, being appointed on one occasion to deliver publicly a panegyric on the Emperor (Valentinian), wherein, to use his own words, he was to utter many a lie, and, lying, was to be applauded by those who knew the falsehood of what he was uttering. While preparing for this exhibition, his heart panting with the feverishness of ambitious thoughts, he passed in the streets of Milan a poor beggar, joking and happy in having just satisfied himself with food. Augustine, struck with envy at the spectacle, pointed this man out to his friends as having obtained, by the gift of a few pence, that fullness of enjoyment which none of them could reach by all their efforts and their toil, but which they still pursued under the goading of unsatisfied desire, and the burden of their own wretchedness.

With many of that community of friends who gathered round Augustine, there seems to have been the same insatiable desire after happiness—the same longing for a "tomorrow," when it might be found, and the same disappointment in the result of every new experiment. Alypius was a passionate lover of the sports of the circus; and, while gentle in his own nature, was wont to become at once both fascinated and frenzied by the sight of the bloody spectacle. But in this, as well as other courses adverse to purity

and holiness of life, he was stopped by severe discipline, on one occasion being by mistake arrested as a thief, and thus exposed as a common offender against the laws. But this state of things was not much longer to continue. The dark veil was gradually being withdrawn. The friends conversed earnestly together, and at last began seriously to examine the writings of the Apostle Paul. Those points on which this writer had appeared to them formerly to contradict himself, now began to be reconciled, and many of the difficulties vanished, "the text of his discourse no longer seeming to disagree with the Law and the Prophets." "But for my temporal life," Augustine writes, "all was yet wavering, and my heart had to be purged from the old leaven. With *the Way*—the Saviour Himself—well pleased; but as yet I shrunk from going through its straitness."

There were questions, however, chiefly relating to the nature and office of the Saviour, about which the friends still perplexed themselves, being more occupied with the opinions of the different sects which then destroyed the peace and union of the Church, than with the purer revelations of Scriptural truth. And, after all, it was not through the satisfying of intellectual inquiry that Augustine was to be brought within the Christian fold. He was evidently, from the first, of a nature to be most deeply impressed through the feelings—the sentiments—the moral faculties. His religion, like his mother's, must be a heart work. Hence the example of those who had felt and suffered like himself often moved him more than any argument could have done, which convinced

the reason alone. Thus, in seeking the society of Simplicius, the father of Ambrose, to whom he went to ask advice, and to communicate the difficulties under which he laboured, he was deeply struck by what he heard from him of his own experience, and that of other Christians. To this good man Augustine told how he had read certain books of the Platonists, which Victorinus, sometime professor of rhetoric in Rome, had translated. Simplicius expressed his delight that such and no worse had been the fallacies imbibed; but chiefly he was gratified, because he had known Victorinus intimately, and could relate, with all its touching details, the history of his conversion to Christianity. Thus he told to the anxious and inquiring listener, how Victorinus, up to the season of old age, had lived a worshiper of idols, and by his talents, influence, and general popularity, had inspired in the people of Rome a more fervent devotion to their heathen gods. It must have been hard for such a man—so reverenced for his learning and his skill in different sciences—an instructor of many Roman senators—to come forward and confess himself a disciple of the lowly Jesus. Yet Simplicius related of this aged philosopher, full of honours, and consequently a mark for general observation, how, not satisfied with merely going to the Christian church, and there receiving the sacrament, he desired openly to declare himself a convert to this faith before the great body of the Roman people. It was indeed proposed to him, out of consideration to his feelings, that he should make his profession more privately. But no. He was not ashamed of the faith which he had

embraced; and, "as the custom with new converts then was in Rome, he ascended to an elevated place in the presence of the holy multitude, and there delivered in his name and made his noble profession as a Christian. When he went up to make his profession, all, as they knew him, whispered his name with the voice of congratulation. And who there knew him not? And there ran a low murmur through all the rejoicing multitude, 'Victorinus! Victorinus!' Sudden was the burst of rapture that they saw him; suddenly were they hushed, that they might hear him. He pronounced the true faith with an excellent boldness, and all wished to draw him into their very heart."

When this account of Victorinus was narrated to Augustine, his soul became on fire to imitate him. Here, again, the chord was touched to which his own nature could so well respond. Augustine could thoroughly understand and admire this conduct in another; but his rebel heart still refused the tribute of personal obedience. The friends continued to meet often, and conversed earnestly together, each intent upon the same subjects of vital interest to all. They were joined by an acquaintance from Africa, one Pontianus, already a Christian; and from him they heard for the first time of Anthony, an Egyptian monk, who had separated himself from the world to worship God in the loneliness of the desert, thus laying the foundation of the monastic system. This friend told them also some striking incidents connected with the great fact of conversion; and, while he spoke, Augustine felt as if a new power was imparted, by which he could

look into his own soul—by which, in fact, he was *compelled* to look into it. The crisis was approaching: the citadel of that deep heart could no longer resist the close assaults of strong conviction. Augustine, turning suddenly to his friend Alypius, exclaimed, "What ails us? The unlearned start, and take heaven by force; and we, with our learning, but without heart, lo! where we wallow in flesh and blood!"

There was something in his countenance and manner which alarmed his friend. A little garden was near, to which he repaired. "Alypius followed, for his presence," says Augustine, "did not lessen my privacy. Indeed, how could he forsake me so distressed? We sate down, as far as might be from the house. I was troubled in spirit." The violence of his emotion—the conflict of his will struggling to resist conviction—seemed almost to threaten the overthrow of reason. Again he separated himself from Alypius, in order to give the fuller vent to his tears in a more retired part of the garden; and here, while the flood of his soul gushed forth, he sent up these sorrowful words:—"How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now? So speaking and weeping, his imagination quickened no doubt to the highest condition of susceptibility, he heard, or thought he heard, sweet voices of childhood in a neighbouring house, continually chanting words which seemed to indicate that he should take up the Scriptures, and read for his instruction the first words which presented themselves. He obeyed: went back into the house, took up the Scriptures, and opened upon what to him were words of life. "Instantly," he says, "at

the end of the sentence, by a light, as it were, of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away. I then shut the volume, and with a calmed countenance made it known to Alypius. He asked to see what I had read. I showed him, and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. It was this: '*him that is weak in the faith receive*,' which he applied to himself, and disclosed to me. And by this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, most corresponding to his character, wherein he did always very far differ from me for the better, without any turbulent delay he joined me. Thence we go to my mother."

The joy of this faithful believer may be more truly imagined than expressed. Augustine's first act was to tell his mother how this blessed change in himself had been brought about. It is remarkable that she makes no question of his sincerity, nor of the reality of the change; but, as he records, "she triumphs, and blesses God." It does not appear to have been the custom with mother and son to conceal anything from one another, still less to deceive, except in that single instance where he left her under a false plea to pursue his journey to Rome. Had his mother withdrawn herself from his confidence,—had she ever allowed herself to give him up, and to let him feel that she did so, there can be no doubt, humanly speaking, what the consequences would have been. But by the very persistency of her faith, and by the close adherence of her inalienable love, she must have imparted to him something of her own confidence that

the "son of so many tears could never be allowed to perish!"

And now, with this great change wrought in the very depth of his heart, was all the secular business of Augustine's life to be concluded. His employment as a teacher of rhetoric must be given up, but not suddenly. "I resolved," he says, "not tumultuously to tear, but quietly to withdraw, the service of my tongue from the marts of lip-labour. Very seasonably, it now wanted but a few days unto the vacation of the vintage, and I resolved to endure them, then in a regular way to take my leave." So these intervening days were endured manfully; and when the time arrived, a great and painful separation took place amongst the friends, Alypius still attending upon the steps of his beloved companion.

But a great public duty had yet to be performed. There was the usual custom to be attended to of delivering in their names as converts to the faith of Christ. It seems that they were at this time at some distance from Milan, and travelled on foot to that city, for the purpose of partaking of the sacraments, and being publicly admitted into the Church. And how was this important journey made? Not by the two friends alone. The offering must be more complete. Augustine had a son, not quite fifteen years of age, "most excellently made," as he tells us, "though born in sin, and of rare wit and talents, surpassing those of many learned men." Notwithstanding his own doubts and difficulties, this boy had been brought up a Christian. He was the most precious gift which the father had to offer. "Him, therefore, we joined with us, our

contemporary in grace, to be brought up in Thy discip'ine; and so we were baptized." In allusion to the youth, he further observes that "his talents struck awe into me. But soon didst Thou take his life from this earth; and I remember him without anxiety, fearing nothing now for his childhood, his youth, or his whole life."

At the time when Augustine's profession was made, the custom of singing in the churches was of recent introduction; and it may easily be imagined how the feelings of the new converts would be attuned to this melody. "How did I weep," says he, "touched to the quick by these hymns and canticles, the voices flowing into my ears, and the truth into my heart." This great but joyful duty accomplished, the little party prepared to return to Africa, thinking that there they might serve God more usefully together.

And now we come to one of those touching scenes, which it needs the pen of Augustine himself to describe. It is nothing to those who cannot enter into and understand it; but it is much to others, knowing what belongs to true fellowship of soul between those who are aspiring after an eternal union. It is indeed so much, that one may question, with some reason, whether these passages of human life are not what brings us more than any other to a living foretaste of the heavenly state. The narrative itself is so simple in its details, so apparently without purpose or conclusion, beyond the mere embodiment of truth; it seems wonderful that it should have been preserved to us for so many hundreds of years, and should still touch our feelings with emotion, as if it was a thing of

yesterday. What mighty revolutions have marked the progress of mankind since these simple words were written! What convulsions, both of mind and matter, have swept away from our knowledge and recognition records of vastly greater moment to human calculation, for which, perhaps, merchants would have given half their gold, and princes half their power; and yet these simple words remain—remain, too, to thrill us with the same sensations, as if penned by the hand of some well-known and familiar friend.

This scene, as already said, was nothing except that the mother and the son stood together by a certain window, looking out upon the Tiber. One of the most skilful and feeling of painters* has commemorated this scene, as if *he* had understood it; for it glows before us, under his touch, in all its simple dignity, needing no accessories—nothing but the son reclaimed and purified, and the holy mother standing in the calm beauty of her perfect joy, with the clear light of heaven around them. It must have been difficult to embody in these simple forms such intensity of feeling with such repose; and yet it is just the same combination which constitutes the secret of moments of spiritual communion like this. There is nothing to compare with them on earth for lifting us out of the entanglement of things gross and palpable, to live and breathe, though it may be only for a brief space of time, in a region of seraphic joy, where the atmosphere is one of perfect peace.

And all friendships, all attachments, might have such seasons, if we would cultivate them aright. Happily

* Ary Scheffer.

for us, it does not need that we should be holy as the faithful Monica was holy, before we can experience something of this enjoyment. Only, we *must* be earnest, aspiring, looking upward and heavenward. And does not that mean, also, that we must be forgiving and forgiven; and consequently, that we must love much?

Thus, then, as the travellers rested on their journey, the mother and the son stood alone, leaning in a certain window which looked over a garden of the house where they lay at Ostia. They were discoursing together alone, very sweetly, and, *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before*, they were inquiring "in the presence of the truth," of what the eternal life of the saints might be, which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*

And when their discourse was brought to that point, that the highest delight of the earthly senses, in the purest material light, was, in respect of the sweetness of that life, not worthy of comparison, they two, raising themselves up with more glowing affection, did by degrees pass through all things bodily, even the very heaven, whence sun, and moon, and stars shine upon the earth; "yea," says Augustine, "we were soaring higher yet, by inward musing, and discourse, and admiring of Thy works, that we might arrive at that region of never-failing plenty, where *Thou feedest Israel* for ever with the food of truth." While panting thus after wisdom as well as truth, they fell into a silence more eloquent than words, and so thought into each other's souls, that they had no need for speech. Soon,

however, they returned to vocal expressions, "where," as the writer himself expresses it, "the word spoken has beginning and end."

"We were saying then, if to any one the tumult of the flesh were hushed; hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air; hushed also the poles of heaven; yea, the very soul hushed to herself, and so, by not thinking on self, did surmount self; hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations; every tongue, and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, which, if any could hear, all are saying, *We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever;*—if then, having uttered this, they too should be hushed, and He alone should speak, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but so that we might hear His very self without these (as we two strained ourselves, and in swift thought touched on that eternal wisdom which abideth over all); could this be continued, and other visions far unlike be withdrawn, and this one absorb and ravish and wrap up the beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after, were not this—*Enter into thy Master's joy?* And when shall that be?"

Of such things were the mother and the son conversing, until the present world, with all its delights, became by comparison contemptible to them, when the mother said, "Son, for mine own part, I have no further delight in anything in this life. What do I here any longer, or to what end I am here, I know not, now that my hoves in this world are accomplished?

One thing there was for which I desired to linger for awhile in this life—that I might see thee a true Christian before I died. My God hath now done this for me more abundantly, that I now see thee, despising earthly happiness, become His servant. What do I here?"

Scarcely five days after this the faithful Monica fell sick of a fever; and such was her strong presentiment of what would be the result of this illness, that, on awaking from a swoon into which one day she had fallen, she said to her son, "Here shall you bury your mother." And when some of her friends, on the near approach of death, spoke with condolence on the subject of her being buried so far from her native country, she replied, "Nothing is far to God; and I do not fear that He should not know where to find me at the resurrection."

"I closed her eyes," says the son, "and there flowed a mighty sorrow into my heart." When the mother breathed her last, the boy Adeodatus, Augustine's son, burst out into a loud lament; then being checked by all, he held his peace. In like manner others became silent; for they thought it not right to solemnize that funeral with tearful lament and groanings. Bitter as this sorrow was to Augustine, there were many things which tended to sweeten the sense of his bereavement. Amongst others he joyed in this, that in his mother's last illness, mingling her endearments with his acts of love and reverence, she called him "dutiful," and said, with "great affection of love," that she had never heard any harsh or reproachful sound uttered by his mouth against her. "But yet, O my God," he exclaims, "what

comparison is there betwixt that honour which I paid to her, and her slavery for me? Being then forsaken of so great comfort in her, my soul was wounded, and that life rent asunder, as it were, which, of hers and mine together, had been made but one." The boy being stilled from weeping, one of the friends took up the Psalter, and began to sing, the whole house answering him in the Psalm, *I will sing of mercy and judgment to Thee, O Lord.*

Subsequently Augustine says, "And, behold, the corpse was carried to the burial. We went and returned without tears." "And then, by little and little, I recovered my former thoughts of Thy handmaid; her holy conversation towards Thee; her holy tenderness and observance towards us; whereof I was suddenly deprived." Fresh bursts of sorrow, wave upon wave, succeed each other at these recollections, and then he chides himself as having yielded too much to natural weakness, and prays the reader of his Confessions, whoever he may be, not to blame him that he wept his mother thus—a mother who, for so many years, had wept for him as one dead in sin; but rather, if one of large charity, that he would weep for the past sins of that unworthy son.

There are many traits in the character of this admirable woman, worthy of deep and thoughtful consideration, perhaps above all others her faithfulness. It is very remarkable how much she was honoured and beloved by Augustine's friends, and by the tender-spirited boy Adeodatus. Young men addicted to the pleasures of the world are not apt to regard in this light the society, and still less the interference, of a

devout and earnest woman, whose constant and persevering aim is to lead their steps into a purer path. What then must have been the secret by which their respectful tenderness was engaged on her behalf? One great point appears to have been her mingled respect and tenderness towards them. High-minded and noble as she was, evidently a woman whose natural right it was to give rather than to receive, it is evident that she was one upon whom young men, or any men, would have found it difficult to look down. Hence, all her ministrations of kindness had a value in them derived from the dignity and purity of her own life and character. Then again we see that she was scrupulous in paying respect to others, as truly dignified characters always are; and we cannot help feeling that the son must have been *proud*, not ashamed, to introduce such a woman to his friends as his mother;—still more proud perhaps when he saw how gently and how kindly she could make herself—"*without stooping*—the servant of all." These are some of the *human* secrets which lie at the foundation of woman's influence. But in this instance there rises so conspicuously above all others that grand secret of Christian faith, and love unquenchable, that in comparison with the power which is thence derived, it seems but idle to speak of natural endowments, or qualities attained by thought and effort; only that there have been earnest and devoted Christian mothers who have failed for want of these; and it may be always well, in studying so great a fact as that of maternal influence, to consider all those accessories which tend to the completion and establishment of the whole.

It is stated by Milner, that "Augustine, after his conversion, returned with some friends to Africa, and lived for some time upon his own estate, retired from the world. Being invited to give instruction to a person of some consequence in Hippo, he was there appointed presbyter to Valerius, Bishop of that city. Here his ministry was useful in the instruction and edification of the brethren, and also in the defeat of various heresies. Heretics vied with the members of the general Church in their attention to the pastoral labours of Augustine, whose fame began gradually to spread over the Western world. Valerius, desirous to preserve such a treasure to his Church, took care to have Augustine elected Bishop of Hippo, in conjunction with himself; the duties of which office he continued to discharge after the death of Valerius. His zeal and laboriousness increased with his authority. The monastery of his institution became renowned in Africa; and about ten Bishops of undoubted piety were sent out from this seminary. These instituted monasteries after the same pattern, and from them other Churches were supplied with pastors; and the doctrines of faith, hope, and charity, by these means, and also by Augustine's writings, which were translated into the Greek tongue, were diffused and enforced with increasing vigour through the Christian world."

IV.

THE MOTHER OF ALFRED THE GREAT.

THE subject of hereditary influences might not unsuitably occupy a place here, did not such considerations involve more than it might be desirable to introduce into these necessarily slight sketches of character. The subject is, without question, one of deep and far-extending interest; but it belongs more appropriately to a different line of investigation and thought. It embraces too, so many elements of human character in its threefold nature—physical, intellectual, and moral—and all these so closely yet so delicately blended, and interwoven as it were into that complex fabric of motive and action which constitutes our being, that a more philosophical mode of treatment would be required than is either necessary or desirable in the present instance.

Respecting the transmission of certain tendencies of character through hereditary channels, we find some persons much more credulous than others; and unless we could be made acquainted with all the transactions of the nursery, and know exactly what has taken place between the mother and the child during the earliest

stages of his existence, it would be impossible to determine the point in relation to the exact measure of resemblance imparted by relationship, and by external influences operating upon the mind and will of the child. To know all this, too, would include so much as to be impossible to the mother herself, even when endowed with the most penetrating faculties which human nature is capable of exercising. For our present purpose we must rest satisfied with the conclusion that, in all probability, there is the same amount of resemblance between the parent and the child in the mental as in the bodily structure of both. Beyond this, however, the mother has opportunities which no one else can possess of encouraging, diverting, or counteracting such early tendencies as she may discover in her child; and we are led to attach greater weight to the influences of training and cultivation, because in many cases where the mother's duties have devolved upon an individual wholly unconnected by any natural tie, the influence has been as powerful, the bond of union as strong, and sometimes even the resemblance of character as great, as in the generality of cases where these duties have been discharged by the mother herself.

In one respect alone are observation and experience entirely agreed with regard to these influences—that the work must be begun early, and perseveringly carried out through the first stages of existence, in order to render any influence complete. Other influences operating in after-life may be far more powerful than any which the mother can bring to bear upon mere childhood; but they are powerful in their separate

and individual nature, sometimes from that very cause producing distortion, and even deformity of character, by the forcing of one class of talents or motives into exaggerated prominence above others; while the mother's influence, directed judiciously and carefully to the whole—to the building up of a perfect *character* rather than the forcing of certain talents into premature and disproportionate action—is precisely that which *might* lay such a foundation for after-life, as no other single or even collective influences would be able entirely to counteract or destroy.

In turning our attention to the real, instead of the imaginative, and in looking for facts to illustrate the power exercised by the mother in forming the character of her child, we find in tradition scarcely more certainty than in pure fiction. Indeed, we look almost in vain for such instances into the early history of our own country; for while the fascinating romance of ballad and legend alike abounds in those instances of female beauty, love, or heroism, without which both would fail to interest, it is difficult to lay hold of any real facts sufficiently clear and definite to serve the purpose of illustration.

In those varied and distracting conflicts, both foreign and domestic, by which ancient Britain, as a country, was divided, and always divided against itself, the names of women both illustrious in character and exalted in rank are not unfrequently found standing prominent both in good and evil. The good and the evil, however, are so blended, and both remain so vague and dim to our perceptions, as regards their influence upon others—the whole fabric of human con

duct, too, appears so entangled in a maze of conflicting interests, based upon treachery and wrong, that to separate the good from the evil would be impossible, nor would it be much more easy to discover through what channel any particular bias of character had been imparted.

Much has been said about the mother of Alfred the Great, who, however, was no relation by birth; and pleasant pictures are painted even to this day, of her instructions conveyed to his youthful mind through the medium of music and poetry. There is no reason to doubt that such teaching possessed a peculiar charm to a nature so constituted as Alfred's, especially when his instructess was a beautiful princess, only a few years older than himself; but in the characteristics subsequently exhibited by this illustrious prince, there is much more which appears justly traceable to his father's influence, than to that of his step-mother; and perhaps still more which is attributable to the peculiar circumstances operating upon his early life. Still the picture is very beautiful, of the young mother imparting instruction to a mind so finely toned as that of her husband's youngest son; and as the after-life ot King Alfred affords such unquestionable evidence of good influence having been derived from some source or other, it is but fair to allow the young queen her full share in the education both of head and heart.

Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred, a man of retired and studious habits, preferring the monotonous and peaceful existence of a monastery to the conflict of battles or the publicity of courts, would seem to have perceived some peculiar qualifications in his youngest son

which induced the father to select him as his successor. In order the better to fit him for the responsibilities of this position, he determined to afford him advantages in the way of mental cultivation, which at that time were extremely rare, and by the generality of men but little valued. Alfred's own mother, a pious and peaceful woman, was dead, and the burden of his son's education and training might be too much for the father alone. He therefore made a journey to Rome with his boy, and by the way became fascinated with the charms of Judith, the daughter of the King of France, herself at that time a mere child.

Unobtrusive and quiet in his personal habits, as Ethelwolf is described, he took care to make himself observed and respected at foreign courts; and for this purpose he travelled like a king, accompanied, during the time of his residence in Rome, with such pomp and splendour as the circumstances of the times afforded. After a residence of twelve months in that city, and having obtained universal favour by the bestowment of rich gifts, and of various benefits to the city, the king returned with his son, then about eight years old, travelling again to the French court, from whence he took with him as his bride the fair Judith, whose charms he had been unable to forget.

It is easy to imagine how this visit to Rome, with all its accompaniments—the means of information it afforded, the converse of learned men, the pomp of ceremonial, and, not least, the respectful and flattering attention with which the visitors were regarded, would affect the mind of the young traveller, and perhaps inspire within his breast a higher appreciation of the

refinements of taste and feeling; as well as a more exalted ardour to become, in his own person, both great and good.

Again, at the French court, at that time far in advance in all the externals of civilization of anything which Britain could boast, Alfred must have received impressions conducive to the improvement of his own mind and manners. He was of an age too young to be much influenced by the corruptions of such a court. Besides which, his father was a man of piety; and it might be supposed of austere habits, but for the anomaly, not altogether foreign to the character of old men, that he had chosen to take home with him a beautiful young wife, scarcely more mature in years than his own youngest child.

On their return home, Alfred appears to have been associated, almost entirely, with this amiable and interesting lady, as his mother. His mind had then become almost prematurely expanded, while his imagination was fired with high and noble aspirations. In outward demeanour, the young prince was quiet and reflective; but with such the ardour of enthusiasm is often deepest and most unquenchable. There were no books then, and the boy was hungering after knowledge. In the retirement of his home, the mother used to sing to him those ballads and poems by which alone the history of former heroes, of distant countries, of spirit-stirring events, were at that time transmitted from one age and one people to another. No wonder that the enthusiastic and deep-thinking boy should love to listen, storing up in his capacious mind all he could learn of the bravery and the heroism, as well as

the justice and the mercy, of noble deeds which he longed to imitate, or even to surpass.

All this while, the prince, who had been so great a traveller—for he had been twice to Rome—was unacquainted with the art of reading. Perhaps it was more pleasant to him to listen. However that might be, the means of obtaining a knowledge of letters were at that time rare, even amongst princes. Judith, whose own education was far in advance of her young pupils, having learned the Saxon language before she left France, had brought with her a manuscript of Saxon poems, splendidly illuminated and adorned, as was the custom with valuable writings at that time. This must have been a wonderful spectacle to Alfred and his brothers; and seeing with what admiration they regarded it, the queen, in order to stimulate a laudable ambition in their minds, promised the bestowment of this treasure upon the first who should be able to read what the beautiful manuscript contained. Alfred was the first to claim the reward, having fulfilled, with resolute determination, the stipulated conditions; and it is more than probable that this discovery of his own power to overcome and master difficulties by the steady application of appropriate means, may have done more for his character than could have been effected by all the facilities for learning which are now in use.

It is curious, and at the same time instructive, to observe how closely, for a long time in the history of civilization, learning and virtue appear to have been associated in the minds of men. To be devoted to learning seems to have been almost universally re

garded as tantamount to being devoted to a praiseworthy and exalted life, opposed to one of vice and folly. And so far as the earnest pursuit of learning and science would necessarily be attended with exemption from those fierce conflicts and cruel animosities by which the world was then distracted, no doubt this view was a correct one. Many distinguished men in these early times are consequently spoken of as being exemplary alike for knowledge and for virtue; and as the illustrious forerunner of these, Alfred himself was scarcely less remarkable as a patron of all those liberal endowments which tend to the true embellishment of life, than he was in his own character for the practice of virtues far above those which generally marked the age in which he lived.

While this young prince was pursuing his education, such as it was, beneath his mother's care, the course of his life appears to have been peculiarly advantageous to habits of thoughtful inquiry. As he was situated, it would seem only consistent with the natural bent of his mind and character, that Alfred should have been disinclined for those warlike adventures in which his more turbulent brothers were so frequently engaged. Instead of which, his future career shows plainly, that his mother had not sung to him in vain of victory in battle, or bravery in the field of carnage and death. Her songs had been of heroes, warriors, pilgrims—in short, of men who could endure and overcome; and thus, whatever her influence in other respects might be, the after-life of this illustrious prince affords sufficient proof, that even a nature so finely tempered as his, must have derived, in early

youth, some benefit from association with other minds that were raised in no ordinary degree above the common level.

It would indeed be a rare instance in human history, if such a character as that of Alfred the Great should stand forth alone and unaided, amidst such counter-influences as were abundantly supplied by the times and the circumstances in which he lived. If, therefore, at the most susceptible period of his life he was associated intimately, and with all the interest of near relationship, with a woman equally earnest but more educated than himself, it is but doing common justice to the queen to attribute to her influence the encouragement at least of much that was afterwards so admirable in the character of Alfred as a king.

We can never do justice to those early influences which Alfred may reasonably be supposed to have received from his mother, without considering him, as really was the case, shut out from almost every other influence of a similar kind. Music was one of Alfred's accomplishments, and his young mother had been accustomed to sing to him in his boyhood. Romance mingled largely with his own love of enterprise, especially when he passed as a minstrel into the camp of his enemy; and his young mother had beguiled the unoccupied hours of his early life with legends of bravery and enterprise, well calculated to fire the imagination of an ardent youth, just waiting on the verge of manhood to take his own active part in life. But the most memorable traces left behind by Alfred, if not the most remarkable phase of his character, belonged to his own love of learning, and his eager

desire for the cultivation and diffusion of letters. Even this might be traced to that beautiful manuscript, so mysterious and wonderful to his first inspection, but afterwards bestowed upon him by his mother, as the just reward of his extraordinary efforts in learning to decipher its mystic characters.

Trifling, and perhaps visionary, as these links of association may appear to the casual observer, they embody a deep meaning as regards the mother. We are apt, and especially so in the present day, to look too much at immediate and outwardly perceptible results, and where these are wanting in practical, or we might almost say *marketable* value, to pay but little regard to the underworking of those agencies which belong to the foundation or the bias of character. Thus an anxious mother will sometimes harass her own mind with regrets, that she is not able of herself to impart that instruction to her children which might render them qualified to fill certain offices of respectability, or might obtain for them credit and distinction in the world. " What can *I* do, especially for my boys ?" is the sad question of many a widow who finds herself left alone with the serious and responsible charge of a young family upon her hands.

Looking at this charge only with regard to such results as the world in general, upon mere external observation, can take cognizance of—looking, for instance, at the prizes won at school, or any other tangible evidence of success, the mother might indeed often be led to despair ; but looking at the *motive*, out of which the effort and the perseverance necessary for success emanate and grow, the case assumes a widely different

aspect; and here the mother, though perhaps no scholar herself, need never despair of her son. What the mother cannot absolutely *teach* herself, she can stir up within the mind of her son an ardent desire to learn. And this desire—this ardour—this onward rush, as it often seems to be with impetuous youth, she can direct to worthy objects; she can stimulate, or restrain, by that unseen cord which Nature has put into her hand, and which she can move like a silken rein, without the young courser being sensible that he is either led or driven.

Supposing all to be true that is narrated of the mother of King Alfred, and accepting this for fact, merely in the way of illustration, we do not read that the young princess made the boy a scholar. Yet he afterwards became one, according to the estimate of scholarship amongst those by whom he was surrounded, and that by the overcoming of such difficulties as would have baffled almost any other man. We do not read that Alfred's mother made him a hero,—he was too young for that. But he afterwards became one in the highest sense, though he had first to run through a course less honourable and wise than that which he pursued in later life.

As in the case of Alfred, the seeds sown by the mother may be long in showing fruit. In his first outset his career was neither successful, nor strikingly meritorious. He was only brave in the field of battle, yet that was something. One seed there was, however, of precious growth, from whencesoever derived—he could reap wisdom from experience—he could be corrected by discipline. When his affairs had arrived

at the most disastrous extremity, he could lay prudence and resolution together, and thus start afresh, undaunted by danger, and undeterred by suffering or privation.

If this is not true greatness, it might be fairly asked what is? And yet all this consists precisely in what comes immediately within the province of the mother to instil, and cherish, and strengthen in her child. An ardent desire after excellence, with a true appreciation of what is excellent—a tendency to reflect and examine before acting, so as to husband resources, and adapt means to ends—a candid looking into self, so as to see wherein there has been error, and how the future may be made an improvement upon the past—these, which seem but little when spoken of, yet are really much when appropriately and earnestly carried out, and above all, when aided, stimulated, and exalted by a true and fervent religion, are exactly those forms of influence under which the mother may most successfully act, and think, and pray, fearing no competitor of equal power with herself; but ever hoping and believing, because this is the duty to which God has called her—this is the work which man is waiting to accept at her hands.

V.

THE MOTHER OF HENRY VII.

THE mother of a long line of English sovereigns, and the foundress of many noble institutions, may not inappropriately fill an honoured place in these notices, even if the title of her son to the distinction of true greatness should remain a matter of some doubt. Margaret Beaufort, however, was a lady so eminent in her position, and in the influences which, through her instrumentality, were brought to bear upon the destinies of her country, and of the many illustrious individuals with whom by the circumstances of rank and the ties of relationship she was connected, that if in any respect she failed to transmit her own virtues to her son, it can only be attributed to those accumulated misfortunes which attended his early life, and which for so long a period deprived him of all personal intercourse with his noble mother.

For much that might throw light upon this intercourse while it continued, we must be satisfied with mere supposition. For all the authority which is necessary for the purpose in hand, I have gladly availed

myself of the services of a lady's pen,* proud that in this, as well as in so many other recent instances, the pleasant duty of bringing forward into fresh prominence illustrious female names connected with history, has devolved upon the patience and the fidelity of English women. In the authenticity of such records, now so profusely scattered before us, I place sufficient confidence. It would be as impertinent in the writer of these brief notices, as unnecessary to the furtherance of my purpose, to cavil about facts, on many of which historians have failed to agree, or to be solicitous to refer only and directly to what are called the highest authorities. Whenever it is possible for me to refer with safety to the writings of women, the reader must not be surprised if I do so from preference, believing that, from the peculiar bent and structure of the female mind, I shall find in such writings more of the *moral* from which I desire especially to draw my conclusions, than in those which might justly be preferred for merits of a purely historical order.

After all the pains bestowed upon delineating the character of Margaret Beaufort in the work alluded to, it is but indistinctly that we can behold the individual as a woman. In her acts of benevolence, in the arts which she so liberally encouraged, and in the now venerable institutions still retaining their association with the honoured name of the Lady Margaret, we read through her works, perhaps more than would ever have been otherwise remembered, of the enlightened understanding and the noble heart of the lady herself. As a woman we can only imagine her prudent, digni-

* Life of Margaret Beaufort, by Caroline Halsted. Prize Essay.

fied, and even holy; purified in the school of affliction, and separated alike from the follies and the vices of the age in which she lived. With all the pride of her illustrious descent from John of Gaunt, and something like a foreshadowed glory about her as the mother of future kings; above all, with the majesty of a woman self-governed, habitually restraining every outward manifestation of impulsive feeling, yet devoutly pouring forth the full tide of her affections to God,—under this image, but still dim in the distance of time, we can only look for the character of Margaret Beaufort as we look for the moon on a misty night, knowing that the radiant orb is there in its beauty, though concealed from us, because of the general diffusion of light through the dense atmosphere which our eyes are unable to penetrate.

Margaret Beaufort was born in the year 1441, allied on her father's side by immediate descent, through only one generation, to John of Gaunt, and on her mother's, to the ancient Earls of Warwick. Her father, the Duke of Somerset, died while Margaret was yet an infant, leaving the care of his only child, the heiress of vast possessions, to the widowed mother, who, however, soon married again, according to the custom of the times, when the guardianship of an heiress was an office attended with considerable difficulty, and sometimes even with danger.

At her residence in Bedfordshire, the Duchess of Somerset maintained a splendid establishment, surrounding herself with all that was regarded as belonging to the dignity of hereditary rank; and amidst which it is but reasonable to suppose that the educa-

tion of her daughter was carried on with the same solicitude for the honour of the house which the child was expected to adorn. Amongst other accomplishments, the healing art was not neglected, the study and use of medicine being at that time considered as an essential part of the education of ladies of rank; and being not unfrequently practised by the fairest and noblest hands, as an act of religious duty meritoriously discharged by the rich towards the poor.

To secure a matrimonial alliance with any young heiress of rank, was considered an object of such importance as not unfrequently to give rise to the bitterest rivalries, and sometimes the most cruel wrong. From the constant wars in which the nobles engaged, especially during the fatal struggles of the rival houses of York and Lancaster, many were dispossessed of their patrimonial estates, a loss which they sought by this means to retrieve; while others were equally intent upon strengthening their own interests at court by a connection likely to bring them nearer to the throne. Thus the guardianship of a young heiress in her childhood, became even a matter of purchase with those who hoped to make their own profits by the bargain.

For these reasons perhaps, as well as to ensure a greater amount of safety from the protection of the sovereign, Margaret Beaufort was placed at the court of Henry VI.; where, before attaining the age of ten, she had her full share of this not very flattering kind of attention. Amongst her suitors, the king himself proposed his own half-brother, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond. But the Duke of Suffolk was also urgent

on behalf of his son and heir. What was the poor child to do? She appears to have laid the matter to heart with an earnestness that was quite unnecessary, seeing that the heiress herself was seldom allowed more than the semblance of a choice in such matters. But Margaret was a grave as well as an earnest child, and in so important a case she took counsel of an elderly gentlewoman, who advised her to pray earnestly to St. Nicholas, as a saint of great efficacy under such delicate circumstances. So the child prayed night after night, in the hope of being shown what to do; and at last a vision arose upon her youthful fancy, of a Bishop arrayed in all the splendour and authority of his sacred office, through whom she received a message in which the name of Edmund was favourably indicated. This message was accepted by the parents, as well as the child, as conclusive; and no wonder, seeing that Edmund was the king's brother.

The real education of Margaret was only now commencing; and with a dignity beyond her years, now that the question of her future position was settled, the earnest and deep-thinking girl set herself to the work of preparing to fulfil her future destiny with honour to the rank and the place she expected to hold. This work of preparation appears to have been diligently pursued up to her fifteenth year, when her friends considered her of suitable age for the marriage contract to be fulfilled. This event took place in 1455, when Margaret assumed the proud title of the Countess of Richmond, little dreaming, in all probability, of the long train of misfortunes which the possession of that title would entail.

Margaret, throughout the whole of her life, maintained that character of earnest piety which marked her early years. She was brave too, as ladies of rank at that time required to be, in no common manner. It is related of her, that her girlhood was animated by an exalted enthusiasm which found expression in a desire that she might join, even in some menial capacity, the armies of Christendom, in marching against the Turks for the rescue of the Holy Land. Indeed everything in Margaret's character which history or tradition has preserved, assumes the same aspect of a lofty magnanimity capable of those high virtues of endurance, and of self-government, for which in after-life she had such abundant need.

By nature, as well as by the exercise of good sense and principle, Margaret appears also to have been remarkably cautious and prudent; and it is necessary to mark these qualities with especial notice, in order the more clearly to trace their transmission, or rather their operation through the mother's influence upon the character of her son. That combination of qualities which is called prudence under some circumstances, becomes wariness under others; and wariness necessarily assumes the office of self-preservation. Extreme solicitude about self-preservation renders every possible precaution necessary against danger or loss; and hence the vice of avarice *may* result, through the legitimate progress of motive and tendency, from the virtue of prudence. Indeed it requires a very nice discrimination in judging of the conduct of others, and a very close calculation of circumstances with regard to our own, to say exactly where prudence ends, and where

avarice begins. But in order to prevent this lamentable descent into evil of what was originally good in itself, the building up of other kinds of good is made indispensably necessary, such as benevolence or charity, and with all the keeping up of a high and noble standard of moral excellence, never to be lost sight of. Margaret might have done this for her son, and in all probability would have done it, but for the cruel separation by which he was deprived of his mother's personal influence during the most susceptible portion of his life; and at the same time surrounded entirely by influences of a widely different and most disadvantageous nature.

To be thoroughly disciplined in youth by difficulties which must be overcome, and even by dangers, requiring the exercise of discretion as well as bravery, is an advantage in the formation of character, of greater value than any which can be derived from the mere cultivation of intellect. But to be ground down as it were to the level of adverse and degrading circumstances, to be always in peril, and only able to secure a scanty amount of personal safety by incessant watching and subterfuges, or treaty with friends who betray, and foes who circumvent—to be kept under the continual operation of these and similar influences during the whole season of youth and manhood, without the liberty of free agency, the encouragement of hope, or the reward of success, is perhaps of all calamities the greatest; because there is no human being however highly endowed, no combination of human faculties or powers, capable of existing unharmed for any length of time, under the crushing operation of such degrading and corrupting influences.

The character which history has assigned to Henry VII. may be sufficiently accounted for by circumstances of the nature here described; and ought in no way to be charged, as regards its peculiar faults, upon his mother. Indeed, it is not difficult to perceive how the very virtues of the parent may have given rise in the habits of the child, to that which afterwards became his vice; and it seems to have been his only one. That excessive prudence in self-preservation which he was almost compelled to practise, that wariness and suspicion, that husbanding of resources, and calculating of ways and means, which his situation so urgently demanded, even in the prime of life, was almost sure to degenerate into avarice as age advanced; because—and here is the point most essential to be considered—because there was no happy influence such as a mother could best have exercised by standing at his side amidst the stormy battle and the fierce conflict of life, maintaining ever with unshaking hand the standard of higher excellence —proclaiming ever this eternal truth, that prudence has no beauty without benevolence, and self-preservation no value without an equal capability of self-sacrifice.

The Earl of Richmond, soon after his marriage, retired with his young wife to Wales, the land of his ancestors. Their residence was at Pembroke Castle, the property of Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, and brother to the husband of Margaret. Surrounded by all the dignity and state which belonged to this princely domain, and married to the man of her choice, life must have worn, to the ardent mind of Margaret, an aspect of no ordinary attraction, especially when, about twelve months after her marriage,

she became the happy mother of a son, afterwards known as Henry of Richmond, and subsequently King Henry VII.

Little indeed could the young mother foresee the fate which awaited herself and her child. The retirement, the romance, the beauty of her residence, its freedom from the cares of state, from the treachery of political intrigue, and the excitement of ambitious hopes, must have been peculiarly congenial to the refined and elevated tone of her mind. But there was little time allowed her for indulgence in pleasures which her taste and feelings could so well appreciate. Already the first blow was at hand—and how many were to follow! Before another year elapsed, Margaret was a widow, left while yet but a child herself, with the sole charge of her infant son, the inheritor of his father's titles and possessions.

It is interesting to observe in how many instances the early death of the father seems to have imparted a vital energy to the powers of the bereaved mother, which has proved the greatest blessing to her children, and scarcely less to herself. In the exigency of her circumstances, all that was great and good in the mother's character has been roused into prompt and decisive action; and from being young in years, she has thus by the training of circumstances become educated in the school of wisdom, and so fitted for educating others.

Margaret's child was sickly and delicate, and must have appeared but little likely to fulfil any ambitious hopes, had such been entertained. Other troubles, too, of a widely different though deeply perplexing

nature, were darkening in the horizon. In the same year which found Margaret a widow, Richard Plantagenet was exalted to the position of Protector of the realm and of the king's person. The White Rose was now in the ascendant, and the interests of this party were vested in powerful hands. By alliance, as well as birth, Margaret was closely associated with the opposite side; and her late husband's brother, whose castle was her home, was in his own person one of the bitterest and most implacable enemies of the house of York.

But the Lady Margaret possessed a mind eminently capable of comprehending, and, so far as might be, guarding against the dangers now gathering thickly around her. She was scarcely more lonely, situated on the solitary rock whose fortress was her only protection, than she was destitute of all help from those relationships and means of defence which a lady of descent so illustrious might naturally have expected to enjoy. The young Countess and her child seem, indeed, to have been actually forgotten, happily for them, during a considerable portion of this stormy and unsettled period. Nor can it be supposed that she was sorry to be overlooked in the transactions of that dark and changeful time, when to be nearly connected with the contending parties on either side seemed to be equally dangerous, and sometimes equally fatal.

For many years the mother was allowed to remain undisturbed in this stately residence, devoting herself to the training of her child, and to her religious duties. What this training comprehended we are only able to surmise. The results afford sufficient ground

for believing that, in all the higher branches of instruction, with which she herself was conversant, the education of the boy was faithfully pursued. But, as already said, while looking around upon a sea of dangers, often changing in their aspect, but always swelling before and behind, Margaret must have been accustomed to throw into her conversation and conduct those prudential hints and cautions which, under happier circumstances, would seem foreign to the nature of a child; and thus it is more than probable that the future sovereign acquired a habit of calculating forethought, which, though it never interfered with his acknowledged bravery, assumed in later life the aspect of that saving virtue which in the rich and in the powerful too often becomes a vice.

In these troubled times nothing could be more forlorn, nothing more perilous, than the condition of a young and wealthy widow, especially if powerfully allied. Margaret must have felt this severely, and in the year 1459 she formed a second alliance, by marriage with Sir Henry Stafford, son of the Duke of Buckingham. Unwilling to resign the peace and the comparative safety which they enjoyed in her secluded residence, the family of Richmond still remained at Pembroke Castle; the death of the Duke of York, in 1461, giving a still more alarming aspect to their affairs, by rousing the opposite party into more vigorous and determined activity. From the desperate and fatal battles which now ensued, Margaret suffered severely in some of her nearest and once most powerful connections. King Edward, her former protector, was taken prisoner. Owen Tudor, the grandfather of her

child, and a violent partisan of the Lancastrian faction, was beheaded, along with many noble supporters of the same cause. Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, her child's uncle, had fled from his country; but that very circumstance might the more endanger the quiet household, who could no longer hope to retain possession of his castle and domain.

In the general distribution of attainted lands and property which followed these events, Margaret herself was leniently dealt with, being allowed to retain a considerable amount of her possessions, while her son was deprived of all, except the bare title of Earl of Richmond. This, however, was but the foreshadowing of troubles. A Tudor could no longer be permitted to hold lands or property belonging to that now hated and degraded name. The noble castle of Pembroke, with all its appurtenances, must be consigned to other hands; and if the Lady Margaret and her son should remain, it must only be by sufferance on the part of the new proprietors. The little party did remain—for whither could they go? But though honourably treated by those who took possession of the estate, their situation became very much like that of state prisoners. The Countess, indeed, soon discovered that her son was becoming an object of suspicion and alarm. She had to watch every change in the order of events, and to guard every point of danger; for how could she feel sure that her own precious child might not be torn from her by force, or inveigled by treachery, and consigned in unconscious innocence to the depths of some dungeon, where all knowledge of his fate might be for ever lost?

It is impossible to imagine apprehensions more terrible than those which must at times have filled the mind of this anxious mother; and had she not throughout her life been a woman of fervent piety, the burden would have been too great for any human strength to bear. But Margaret had been eminently *prepared* for this. She had sought her God while young. Prayer was her habitual resource, and it did not fail her now. She had not schooled herself for nothing. Self-government was now essential to her safety; and, what was more to her, it was essential to the safety of her son. A single unguarded step, a single premature assumption, might have been fatal to both. Had she deviated in any respect from this strict line of prudence, it is more than probable that Henry Tudor never would have worn the English crown. As it was, he might possibly have more adorned that crown, had his youth and early manhood been more fortunate, more joyous, and more free; for it is said of him, that he grew up "sad, serious, and sedate;" and these are not the elements of that happy boyhood which is most advantageous to the perfect man. No wonder that his youthful brow should have been stamped with these solemn and enduring lines. Besides this tendency to a premature and almost unnatural gravity, Henry was peaceable in disposition, and always inclined to justice and mercy. Lord Bacon described him as "fair, and well-spoken, with singular sweetness and blandishment of words; rather studious than learned, with a devotional cast of countenance, for he was marvellously religious both in affection and observance." A noble testimony this to the character of the widow's son, so

far as he was trained under his mother's influence and example.

After pursuing for some time an obscure and comparatively uneventful course of life in the retirement of their Welsh home, the quiet party were roused by the tidings of a counter-revolution, now headed by the powerful Earl of Warwick, the result of whose energetic movements was, that Henry VI. was released from imprisonment, and again placed upon the throne. With many of the exiled Lancastrian party, Jasper Tudor returned. His nephew was now fourteen years of age; and, seeing how his close seclusion in Wales must have deprived him of many advantages in the way of education and companionship, his uncle took him to London, introduced him to the king, and then placed him at Eton to complete his studies.

But Henry was destined to a very brief enjoyment of these advantages. After the disastrous battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, he was again sent back to his mother, in Wales, as a means of greater security,—the death of Edward, Prince of Wales, as well as of his unfortunate father, having placed Henry in a much more perilous situation than before. By the adherents of the fallen line of Lancaster he was now looked upon as rightful heir to the throne, and, consequently, could not be regarded with indifference by the opposite party, even in that obscurity to which his prudent mother was again prepared to retire. To render their position more alarming, the formidable and restless Jasper Tudor had fled, in company with his nephew, to his own castle of Pembroke, where he was closely besieged; and, but for the arrival of unexpected suc-

cour, all must have fallen into the hands of the ruling party. In the storming of his castle, and the confusion which ensued, Jasper escaped, with his nephew and the Countess, to a secure retreat on the coast, where a vessel was waiting to convey the young Henry from the shores of that land which no longer afforded them a peaceful or safe asylum. Here the mother parted from her son, little dreaming, perhaps, how many years would elapse before their next meeting, nor how strangely different that meeting would be. The frequent changes of government, with the many and sudden alternations of success and defeat which had so strangely marked the experience of her past life, might not unreasonably inspire within the mother's breast a secret hope of speedy deliverance for her child. And, if not, she had still the same unshaken trust in God that all would be well; and, with a firmness and magnanimity which could be derived from no other source, she committed her son to the protection of Heaven alone. For the first time he was now entirely separated from her personal influence and care; to whatever dangers or temptations he might be exposed, her counsels could no longer reach his ear, nor her affectionate solicitude console his heart.

To all human calculation nothing could look, at this time, less probable than that the youth should escape those complicated calamities which, up to a certain period of his life, seemed to point to Henry Tudor as the especial mark for misfortune and disaster of almost every kind. Even now the elements themselves appeared as if combined against him. No sooner had the vessel which conveyed him put to sea, than a ter-

rible storm arose, which drove the discomfited exiles from the course they had intended to pursue. As the first point of safety, they landed on the shores of Brittany, and here they were immediately arrested as prisoners. Driven out from one country, they found no better hospitality in another. They were, in fact, too valuable to be willingly given up; and, as a rich ransom might reasonably be anticipated, the luckless Henry was closely imprisoned. Jasper Tudor, being sent to a distant fortress, was cut off from all intercourse with his nephew; and the youth, not fifteen years of age, was thus left to cope, as best he might, with the power of distant enemies, and sometimes with the treachery of present friends.

Henry's "sweetness of spirit," however, of which Bacon speaks, must here have served him well, and, perhaps, his prudence still better. His friends were not all treacherous; and by degrees the melancholy circumstances of his hard fate, added to his naturally conciliatory manners, gained over some stanch adherents and powerful supporters of his cause. No wonder that amongst these we find the names of illustrious women. Francis, Duke of Brittany, into whose hands the Earl of Richmond had fallen, might find his interest in prolonging those treaties which seemed likely to enhance the ransom of his prisoner; but the Duchess, with a more generous interest, attached herself to the cause of suffering youth, and, with better feeling, she subsequently served him better. Especially, at the court of France, whither the wanderers had first been bound, the interests of the young Earl were so warmly espoused by the Lady Anne de Beaujeu, sister of

Charles VIII., that she not only succeeded in obtaining for him loans of money, but a considerable army of men to serve his utmost need.

The tedious course of Henry's long imprisonment at Vannes, the many plots and counterplots for his escape, the disastrous failure of every scheme, the defeat and revival of successive attempts to gain possession of his rights, are matters of history, which claim no further detail here. With what patience, and in what spirit the noble mother was able to endure the long agony of hope, so often and so cruelly defeated, is that which more especially demands our attention.

The Lady Margaret would have learned her lesson of submission imperfectly, if she had not been able, even under these circumstances, to be still and wait. She could do nothing for her son, and would have more injured than served him by manifesting any open resistance to his fate. Her possessions were now considerably reduced, her friends were few, for death, either peaceful or in the field of battle, had stripped her of almost all who had been connected by the ties of consanguinity. It might have seemed to some women of ordinary character, that under these circumstances there was little left for them to do. But not thus did life, even when stripped of its enjoyments, present itself to the Countess of Richmond. We learn that she retired in peace to her estates, there to perform whatever good her noble and generous hand might find to do. Even a brief residence of the Countess, at almost any place, was marked by lasting proofs of her benevolence; but chiefly with regard to her own property and people, she studied every means

which her active mind could suggest for promoting industry, or in any way improving the condition of the poor.

Solicitous to afford an example in her own person of the virtues she so earnestly recommended, Margaret devoted a large portion of her time to the most serious and elaborate pursuits. The translation of books of scholastic divinity was one of her favourite occupations; and it was one which accorded well with the devotional character of her mind and habits. Such translations could only be accomplished at that period by the most careful and exact transcribing, the art of printing being then unknown. The very titles of the works upon which the Lady Margaret employed her pen are enough to astonish the light readers of the present day; and when to the gravity and weight of them is added the difficult and laborious penmanship, by which such records of thought or experience were preserved, we see more clearly the harmony which existed between such constant and persevering efforts, and the patience and magnanimity with which the writer herself was able to sustain the various trials of her peculiar lot.

While the mother was thus engaged, many years elapsed, during which the rigour of her son's imprisonment was never relaxed. But by the time that Henry had attained his twentieth year, a dawn of hope began to penetrate the gloom in which his destiny appeared to be enveloped. It is said of Henry as a youth, that he was "cautious and timid;" and no wonder; yet he had so far profited by experience in the school of adversity, as well as by his mother's influence, that his

decisions, even under the most trying circumstances, were never found wanting in wisdom and discretion; nor were his actions deficient in firmness and true bravery. A single rash step, a single movement founded on ill-judging credulity, and, in many of the most critical moments of his life, all would have been lost to him. On one occasion especially, having been beguiled by plausible assurances to venture so far as the coast of Brittany, with the intention of proceeding to England, the impression upon his own mind that he was about to become the victim of treachery, was such as to force him back again into the retreat where, if he enjoyed but little freedom, he had reason to believe that his personal safety would still be secure; by which means a project was evaded, which must have terminated in the total ruin of his hopes.

During the time when her son was thus waiting for deliverance, the Countess of Richmond became again a widow, by the death of Sir Henry Stafford, who left her his sole executrix, with many other proofs of his high appreciation of her excellent judgment and inestimable worth. Amongst the few but valuable memorials which are left of the domestic virtues of this family, there remains a bequest in the will of Sir Henry, to a faithful and well-trusted servant, Reginald Bray, who afterwards acted an important part in forwarding the interests of the Countess and her son.

But the lapse of time which produced so little alteration in the actual circumstances of the Earl of Richmond, was gradually bringing about a considerable change in the feelings of the different parties at home. The prudent Margaret, who noted carefully all the

indications of the times, saw this, and prepared for acting accordingly, by applying herself to the delicate task of conciliation. She herself had never been the advocate of any extreme or violent measure, nor had she given the reigning party cause to apprehend any dangerous interference on her part. Indeed, the king had gained much in popularity throughout the country, and many who had been stanch supporters of the Lancastrian cause were brought to submit, without murmuring, to his authority. Margaret was one of the foremost of these, regarding it as a matter of prudence, as well as duty, publicly to manifest her allegiance to the reigning sovereign. Prudent in all her steps, the Countess even accepted a proposal of marriage from a gentleman closely connected with the king's household, and an honoured relative of her own, Thomas, Lord Stanley, whose former wife was sister to the famous Earl of Warwick. By this alliance the Countess was brought once more within the court circle, where she must have watched with no ordinary interest every symptom of change in the political horizon. Removed from the retirement of her estates in the country, to occupy her husband's princely residence in London, Margaret was soon called upon to feel the uncertainty of her position, even here. Lord Stanley was appointed to lead an army into the north, to assist the Duke of Gloucester, and had scarcely commenced his operations there, when recalled by the unexpected death of the king, Edward IV.

A prospect must now have opened upon the Countess of Richmond, requiring a steady mind to contemplate with equanimity. Her husband had been deeply

pledged to the late sovereign to maintain the rights of his family, and a youthful heir to the throne remained in the person of the king's son. But then, there was the formidable Richard at hand, uncle to the prince, and already appointed protector to the realm. From his unscrupulous domination what might not be expected? It was a time for silence and submission on the part of all who desired to retain either liberty or life. And by submission, there is no doubt that both the Countess and Lord Stanley better served the interests to which they were devoted, than they could have served them by resistance. Thus we find them both filling a conspicuous place in the courtly and magnificent solemnities which attended the coronation of Richard III., but with what feeling they looked on, it is not very difficult to imagine.

It was a part of the policy of the new sovereign to conciliate, where it did not serve his purposes to remove by treachery or to overcome by force. The allegiance of a Stanley was worth ensuring, and the Countess of Richmond he must have regarded as a safer friend than foe. Her husband was therefore promoted to the rank of Constable of England, and invested with many other marks of honour and esteem. But the atmosphere of Richard's court, however favourable to personal interest, must have been far from congenial to feelings of confidence and trust. Unresisting as public opinion had been to that strange usurpation of power by which Richard was placed on the throne, it was not possible for the public voice to remain long silent with regard to the mysterious disappearance of the young princes, whom, as protector and relative,

their uncle had been doubly bound to secure from harm. As suspicion grew darker and stronger in this direction, mingling with the claims of violated justice, and the terror of consequences yet more calamitous, the honour of Lord Stanley was more deeply implicated on behalf of the Princess Elizabeth, who would be sole heir to the late king, in case of the death of her brothers.

As the sovereign power of Richard became increasingly unpopular, discontent turned, not unreasonably, to the fate of the princes in the Tower, whose melancholy death remained not long a matter of doubt. Personal differences, too, arose between Richard and some of his former friends, amongst whom was the powerful Duke of Buckingham. Over all these exasperated feelings the Countess of Richmond must have cast a thoughtful glance, revolving in the secret of her own mind the probable chances of the future. Nor was her husband altogether unwilling to listen to suggestions which seemed to promise hope for the charge which lay nearest to his heart, in the person and the fortunes of the Lady Elizabeth of York. Under these circumstances, a plan which had been early formed for an alliance between the two houses of York and Lancaster, began afresh to wear an aspect full of promise; and as a mode of allaying these fatal and long protracted differences by amicable means, the Countess not only approved the measures now set on foot, but entered into the prosecution of them with all the energy of her ardent mind.

A scheme, which appears to have originated with the Duke of Buckingham in hate, was cordially adopted

by Margaret and her husband, as the surest method of reconciling all parties under one legitimate and most amicable bond. For this, in all probability, the Countess had long wished and waited with all a mother's fervent desire. For this she could ask the blessing of that God whose hand had hitherto sustained her under every trial; and with the mingled affection of a parent, and the zeal of one who sought earnestly her country's good, she so far departed from her accustomed line of patient acquiescence, as to lend her willing aid to a plan for bringing over her son to England, asserting his title to the throne, and then, by marriage with the Princess Elizabeth, uniting for ever the two rival interests of York and Lancaster.

The influence, as well as the concurrence, of the Countess of Richmond, was now sought by men of eminence, who knew that in her counsels their secret would be safe. Thus, in the private interviews, the grave deliberations, and the many plans and stratagems necessary for carrying out this purpose, the Countess held a responsible and honoured place, her husband remaining at his post of duty beside the king, neither betraying the secrets of his wife by open acquiescence, nor frustrating her hopes by opposition.

By skilful negotiations, the Earl of Richmond, who had never been inactive, was at last liberated from confinement. He had, in fact, been long preparing for this change in his circumstances, and he had so far succeeded in exciting interest in his favour, as to be enabled to set sail for England with an armament of forty ships, provided by his foreign allies. But again, almost at the summit of his hopes, they were crushed

by a fearful storm. His vessels were dispersed, some wholly lost, and the remainder of his force so scattered, that he himself barely escaped with life, being cast upon the coast of Normandy.

The Duke of Buckingham, with an army under his command, had been waiting to receive the ill-fated Henry in Wales. Before the prince could again gather strength to renew his attempt, the Duke was beheaded as a traitor. The reigning sovereign had found time for adopting every precaution which his selfish policy could devise. Lord Stanley himself became an object of suspicion. The Countess was banished from court, and closely restricted to the precincts of her husband's residence, while her lands and titles were declared to be forfeited. But notwithstanding these suspicions and indignities, her trusty servant, Reginald Bray, remained near her person, and through his assistance the mother still found means, not only to supply her son with large sums of money for the prosecution of his plan, but also to send messages amongst her friends for the purpose of rousing them into co-operation in a cause which she devoutly believed to be no less just and righteous, than it was dear to her heart as a mother.

Notwithstanding all Richard's precautions, Henry, who had learned too severe a lesson to be daunted by disaster, once more collected what force he could, and by alternate waiting and acting—now feigning submission, and then suddenly assuming right and power—at length accomplished a landing on his native shores; in what precise manner, or by what circumstances surrounded, is now but little known, the eagerness of

the Welsh bards and minstrels to celebrate this romantic story having left but little of the real facts connected with the event unvarnished by their individual taste or fancy.

That the faithful Reginald Bray was the first to meet the Earl with a supply of money, and that a powerful party was ready to receive him, are, with many of the more important facts belonging to this eventful period, matters of well-known history. With the future proceedings of Henry Tudor, up to his being crowned on the field of battle, and with his comparatively peaceful and prudent reign as King Henry VII., these notices have no further concern. But, as regards the mother, there are still the same noble characteristics to be observed, with a line of conduct, distinguished, to the close of her useful life, by the same virtues,—only assuming, with the advance of years, a more private and devotional tendency.

Some women, and perhaps not a few, would have considered the establishment of a son upon the throne, a lawful pretext for demanding an increased amount of homage, attended with personal dignity and power. The Countess of Richmond knew better what belonged to wisdom, as well as prudence. If her son knew how to govern the kingdom, whose crown she believed him justly entitled to wear, her presence and her counsels could be no longer necessary to him; if not, he was now too old to be taught wisdom by a woman. She therefore scrupulously abstained from all interference in matters of state, quietly withdrawing her presence from court, except on occasion of some public solemnity, or some family rejoicing, when to be absent,

might have been construed into indifference to the honour or the happiness of her son.

The grateful task of tracing out one of the best features of Henry's character, as displayed in prompt and careful attention to the interests of all by whom he had been faithfully served; even the celebration of his marriage with the Princess Elizabeth, that event of happy omen—all these must be left, in order to follow the mother, now known as the Countess of Richmond and Derby, into her retirement, there to admire her acts of munificence, apparently almost too numerous and gigantic for one lifetime; and to recognize in all the same dignity, blended with devotional zeal, which had always marked the public life of Margaret Beaufort.

When the art of printing was introduced into England, the Countess became one of its most active supporters, zealously patronizing the enterprising Caxton by ordering the printing of new works, one of which, written by himself, was dedicated to the Countess of Richmond. In the same spirit of enlightened liberality, Margaret sought out amongst her own kindred, whether allied by birth or marriage, those who might either need or profit by her protection and care. Her grandson, Prince Henry, experienced at a later period no trifling amount of these advantages, and with him were associated many young men of noble families, who shared equally the benefits of nurture and tuition thus liberally bestowed.

But chiefly is the honoured name of the Lady Margaret connected with the founding of scholarships, the endowment of schools, and other important institu-

tions which at that period generally comprehended religion and learning under one head, the establishment or support of which was regarded alike as the highest merit in the patron, and the greatest boon to the community.

In her plans for the carrying out of these greater and more public works, the Countess was intimately associated with Bishop Fisher, the friend of Erasmus, whose celebrity as a man of fervent devotion had first been the means of introducing him to her notice. Under his sanction the Countess was admitted into fellowship with several religious communities—a practice at that period not unfrequent with persons of great devotional zeal, even without adopting all the restrictions of conventual life. Beyond this, Margaret bound herself by a solemn vow to consecrate the remainder of her days to prayer and penance, the record of this vow being committed to her faithful counsellor, Dr. Fisher, and deposited by him in the archives of St. John's College, Cambridge.*

But the name of this illustrious lady is associated with so many learned men, equally eminent for sanctity of character, under whose advice and sympathy her wealth and patronage were devoted to such numerous and distinguished objects, all connected with the promotion of knowledge, or the honour of religion, that it would be impossible to compress, within any moderate bounds, the detail of such vast and magnificent undertakings. With the University of Cambridge the name of the Lady Margaret is most especially associated. The building of Christ's College had been

* Life of Margaret Beaufort.

commenced by her kinsman, Henry VI., but left unfinished, and the carrying on of this great work, undertaken by the Countess, was completed in 1506. Nor was this enough to satisfy a spirit so enterprising. Scarcely was one edifice completed, when the Lady Margaret undertook another and most magnificent structure, that of St. John's College.

The study of architecture in this and the preceding reign made rapid progress, and the erection of religious edifices, especially such as embraced the means of promoting knowledge as well as religion, was so associated in people's minds with the highest exercise of practical devotion, that it would scarcely have been a matter of surprise had the Lady Margaret, with her vast resources and her equally vast liberality, obtained the homage awarded to peculiar sanctity even without its attendant Christian graces.

Such, however, was far from being the case with the Countess of Richmond; and in contemplating the splendour of her public munificence, it would be unjust to lose sight of her private virtues. Seldom indeed has history left any record of a character so remarkable for both; and we return again, with peculiar satisfaction, to notice a few of those agreeable traits which belonged to Margaret Beaufort as a woman. Ever at the post of duty, whether public or private, we find her on all occasions in which a mother's attention could be demanded, faithful in her solicitude for the Princess Elizabeth, evincing towards her not only the respect due to her rank when a Queen, but a thoughtful tenderness, which could not have been surpassed, had the Princess been her own child.

Amidst the splendour of coronation solemnities, Elizabeth was supported by the Countess of Richmond as by a true mother. In the rejoicings at every birth which occurred in the royal household, Margaret left her retirement and the scene of her private devotions, to rejoice with the court. In nothing which called for the exercise of womanly feeling or affection was this illustrious lady found wanting, even to the remotest claim of relationship or kindness. She could, however, be just as well as kind, and when the safety of the throne was endangered, she could support those necessary measures of retribution which sometimes touched her own near connections.

With the same warmth of motherly affection which the Countess ever manifested for her son and his consort, their children were adopted almost as her own. The premature death of Prince Arthur, not long after his marriage with Catherine of Aragon, was the first severe blow which fell upon the domestic happiness of this united family. The death of the amiable Queen soon followed. Then, one after another, friend followed friend, until the Countess lived to find herself stripped of almost every earthly tie. Twelve months after the death of the Queen she became again a widow, and five years later, the crowning sorrow of her life had to be sustained in the death of her son and only child, King Henry VII.

So long as the Countess survived, however, she felt that there was work to be done; and now more than ever, when travelling comparatively alone along the downward road of life, she seems to have remembered the poor and the afflicted. Amongst her last acts of

benevolence we read that she founded an almshouse for indigent women, that she endowed a similar institution at Hatfield for twelve infirm persons; and maintained divers poor scholars at Oxford, providing them with tutors at her sole expense.

In the midst of these good works, too numerous to be recorded, and while many noble plans remained uncompleted, the indefatigable spirit of this illustrious woman was permitted at last to find its rest and its reward. As if the death of her son had snapped asunder the last of her earthly bonds, the Lady Margaret appears never to have entirely recovered from the stroke; and in the short space of three months after this calamity, the Countess of Richmond expired at Westminster, on the 29th of June, 1509, in the sixty-ninth year of her age; "retaining," to use the words of her biographer, "to the last moment of her existence, those high resources and vigorous powers, that calm resignation and unsubdued fortitude which can only result from a religious and well-disciplined mind."

Writers of her own and immediately succeeding times, have dwelt upon the character of the Countess of Richmond with the most enthusiastic admiration, recounting her deeds of charity, her acts of devotional munificence, and the many instances in which her religious zeal found expression in those durable memorials which to this day commemorate her enterprising spirit and her noble name. In our more enlightened times it is perhaps more congenial with the spirit which pervades our modes of thought and expression, to speak of the Lady Margaret as a devotee and an

ambitious woman; but when the circumstances and the character of the period in which this lady lived are considered, the fact of her being a devotee becomes but another mode of describing a religious woman, deeply and solemnly impressed with the importance of divine things, and with her own imperative duty to assign to them their true pre-eminence; while her ambition assumes the most legitimate form, being centred in her only son, whose claims *she* might well be pardoned for maintaining; and to both these elements of character united, we are perhaps indebted for much that was munificent in the encouragement of art and letters, as well as for those majestic edifices which still bear the name of the Lady Margaret.

VI.

THE MOTHER OF FRANCIS I.

We are now entering upon the life of a woman whose character has recently been exhibited in a work of much patient research, and with all the advantages of impartial and judicious treatment.* We have no holy mother now to contemplate, no prayerful and devoted Christian, solicitous above all things for the *eternal* welfare of her child. But yet we have, in the mother of a king of France, to whom is generally assigned the distinction of greatness, a woman so noteworthy, so really remarkable in her maternal capacity, as to illustrate the skilful exercise of a mother's power and influence more forcibly than has been the case with many women whose virtues were better worthy of imitation.

Had the almost unrivalled loveliness of the *daughter's* character been the subject of consideration, we should have had a happier task, as is already shown by the interesting work alluded to. Nor is it possible to study the life of Marguerite d'Angoulême, without some leaning to the idea that the mother of such a woman must have been, in some of her own virtues,

* Life of Marguerite d'Angoulême, by Miss Freer.

as she undoubtedly was in her intellectual endowments, far above the average of those by whom she was surrounded. There must, we think, have been something redeeming about her, which history would not improbably fail to record, because the more retired and private merits of women were at that time but little valued. Louisa of Savoy was also one of those in whom are united the greatest extremes of character; with whom the force of passion, whether in the form of love, hate, ambition, or even vice itself, when displayed in a conspicuous situation, is such as to make their eccentricities apparent to general observation, and thus these passions not unfrequently find a place in history, after the milder and more endearing attributes of such a nature are forgotten.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in connection with Louisa's naturally bold and ambitious character, was her power of self-government, displayed especially before she had attained the possession of power over others. Here also was her strength, and her commanding and enduring influence. It would seem more consonant with the nature of such passions as those by which she was too often governed, that she should have been rash, impulsive, violent; and hence that she should have been always liable to defeat her own ends. But no, she could be still when she chose to be so, could remain obscure, conform,—nay, even obey,—when the object to be ultimately gained was worth this subjugation of herself, with all her jealousies, her hatreds, her inborn love of power, and her strong determination, for her children, as well as for herself, that they should both possess and enjoy it.

It is not necessary here to go far back into the history of Louisa's ancestry; but simply to state that she was the daughter of Philip Duke of Savoy, and of Marguerite de Bourbon who died when she was seven years old. From her father she experienced but little either of care or kindness, so that she was the better prepared to welcome, with respectful regard, the entrance into his neglected family of a second mother, the Princess Claude of Penthièvre; and it is one of the best traits in Louisa's character that, with the children of this second marriage, she always maintained the most cordial and friendly intercourse, faithfully defending their rights, when herself in the enjoyment of all she could ever have desired of dignity and power.

Indeed, there seems to have been little in Louisa's early life which the most rigid moralist could have condemned. On the other hand, there was much to approve and commend; much even that gave promise of a rational and well-ordered life in the future. Married at the age of fifteen to the Count d'Angoulême, a man much older than herself, the young wife appears to have had no difficulty in conforming to the retired and simple mode of life which past experience of a calamitous and depressing nature had rendered most congenial to his feelings. The Count was at that time thirty-five, he had known the bitterness of disappointed hopes, the defeat of ambitious projects, and he had the good sense and right feeling to prefer the repose of a dignified retirement, to any open contest with those in power, who had every disposition to make him feel how entirely he was discarded from

royal favour. Notwithstanding the difference of age, however, the Count d'Angoulême was one of those men who find no difficulty in inspiring feelings of mingled love and reverence in the young and ardent mind of woman. His universal kindness and courtesy, combined with deep learning and knowledge, may account, in some measure, for the tone thus probably imparted to the tastes of his young wife, who ever afterwards distinguished herself amongst the ladies of that age, by her delight in the society of persons remarkable for their learning and accomplishments, as well as by her own studies and attainments. Well would it have been for Louisa, and for all around her, if she had drawn the standard of her moral life from the same high model, imitating her husband in those nobler and purer virtues by which he engaged the love and veneration of all who came within the circle of his influence, so as to leave behind him an almost unblemished name.

To conform to the habits and tastes of such a man, could scarcely have been an unwelcome task to any wife so tenderly beloved as Louisa appears to have been; and though but a child at the time of her marriage, she had the good sense to see and appreciate the advantages of her position. It is true her latent powers and passions were at that time undeveloped, perhaps unsuspected even by herself; for what can be so restraining, so softening, so purifying to youth, as to live always in an atmosphere of wisdom and virtue, when combined with love? Louisa had been prepared, too, for the full enjoyment of this exalted happiness by the severe discipline of her early years. She had

known little of the joyousness of childhood, and nothing of the pleasures of a prosperous court. The death of her mother, her father's neglect, and her own delicate health, which at one time threatened a termination of life like that of her mother's,—these, and many causes of a similar nature, must have rendered the young wife peculiarly happy in her husband's home: although the connection with the Count d'Angoulême, at that time virtually banished from royal favour, had been thought scarcely sufficiently exalted for the sole daughter of the house of Savoy. Far indeed, except perhaps from the dreams of the young wife, must have been at that period the dignity of her future position, as the honoured mother of a king—the mistress of the most brilliant court in Europe.

In this peaceful retirement, Louisa became the mother of two children,—Marguerite, born in the year 1492, and two years later, Francis, the future king of France, the former born at Angoulême, the other at Cognac. Had the young mother, in the secret of her heart, indulged hopes for her son which pointed to the throne, a circumstance which took place almost at the same time with the birth of her son, must have effectually excluded this prospect from her view. Anne of Bretagne, wife of the reigning sovereign, about the same time with Louisa, gave birth also to a son; and although the Duke of Orleans remained childless, there appeared but little human probability that the direct line of succession to the throne would fail.

The alternate rising and sinking of such hopes as these two mothers would not unreasonably entertain, all depending upon the feeble breath of a newborn

babe, as weak and as helpless in the palace as the cottage, might form a curious subject for calculation, could we penetrate by one general glance the inner workings of those separate interests. Two women, neither of whom would be likely very graciously to give place to the other, were now at issue with their two infant sons—Louisa's far in the distance. Twelve months, however, had scarcely passed, before the little life of one was quenched, and that the immediate heir to the throne. But Louisa was not to experience unalloyed enjoyment in her secret triumph. Her honoured husband was attacked with alarming illness, and all that was good, and true, and tender in the heart of the young wife, was suddenly called into exercise by this unexpected calamity. All that was energetic too, for with a decision which afterwards characterized every action of her life, she obtained the assistance of the most able and skilful physicians, with every other means which her sagacious and ready mind could suggest. Nor was it until all had been tried in vain, and the last hope must be relinquished, that she yielded to the overwhelming force of natural grief. "She herself," says the biographer of Marguerite, "seldom quitted her husband's chamber, resting neither night nor day, and attending upon him herself with an assiduity which nothing could daunt. It is related, that for several days previous to the Count's decease, she refused to quit his side, even to take needful refreshment; and when all was over, so vehement was her despair, that she was lifted fainting from the bed, and carried to her own apartment."

There is perhaps nothing in this aspect of the grief

of the young widow, for which a counterpart might not be met with every day, even amongst the humblest and least remarkable of human sufferers. But this strength of feeling becomes worthy of notice in connection with the after-life and conduct of such a mother. Louisa was at this time only twenty years of age. She was more than usually endowed with natural talents and graces, which she spent much time in cultivating; and to her extraordinary beauty of person was added a peculiar fascination of look and manner, which few of those who were brought under its influence were able to resist. A woman constituted for the extremes of good and evil, we must not forget to do her justice wherever the good predominates; and if that is less often than the evil, we must remember the times in which she lived, taking into our estimate the important fact, that virtue, as we regard it, was estimated then at a value very inferior to that of skill in the management of difficult affairs, or boldness and decision in the exercise of power.

It is, however, a somewhat melancholy task to trace out the history of a young life, which leaves behind it, almost at every stage, something of its beauty and its genuineness of feeling. In childhood, and in early youth, Louisa's experience had been deeply shadowed by neglect. For a few happy years she had known what it was to be cherished by a noble affection, and dignified and rendered worthy by the influence and companionship of a wise and honourable man. In the anguish of her bereavement she was again consigned to neglect; and under these circumstances her character appeared in the most favourable aspect it was

capable of assuming. If the world forgot her, she could live without it. The treasures of her heart were her own; and to the education of her children she devoted herself with all the energy and talent which belonged so peculiarly to her own nature.

We see Louisa's wisdom here in remaining *quiet.* There was no opening for her in that exalted career, which, not unreasonably, she might be longing to pursue; but she could wait; and instead of being forward and obtrusive in asserting claims which had then no chance of being favourably received, she turned the present time to the best account, by devoting her brilliant powers to the training and cultivation of the minds of her children. In this, especially, we behold her wisdom,—that in *waiting* she was also *preparing.* Some wait impatiently, fretting, and chafing against adverse circumstances, and so losing the present moment. Others wait in languor and disappointment, doing nothing. Not so this careful and judicious mother. Whatever might prove to be the future lot of her children, she would prepare them for that which, in her estimation, was the highest and most glorious; and if that should never be theirs, she was determined that their career should at all events be rendered brilliant and distinguished, by the exalted nature of those attainments which it was her direct and immediate aim to cultivate to the highest perfection. Leaving that future, then, which must, as regarded her children, depend upon circumstances impossible for her to control, she devoted herself to the present, which she *could* control; and in this great and noble duty, she was cheered by the consciousness that she was ever

preparing. While faithfully engaged in this task, no future event could take her by surprise so as to render ineffectual what she was doing for the present.

It is highly to the credit too of this remarkable woman, that she employed herself in preparing her children, not only to fill the highest position in the realm, but to fill it with dignity, and even with glory. If her son should ever reign as the sovereign of France, she was determined it should be not merely as a king, but as a scholar and a gentleman. He was not to govern only by a power derived from herself, but as a man of brilliant endowments and cultivated tastes, who would thus be able to draw around him other men of high attainments; so that his court should become the centre of all that was most splendid and illustrious in his own or any preceding age. For this she was preparing all through her season of retirement, when, as a neglected widow, forgotten, unnoticed, and consigned to the exigences of a narrow fortune, she might with some reason have resigned herself to despondency and hopeless grief.

Louisa knew better than this. She was young: for her, as well as for her children, there was a vast future growing out of the present. Whatever aspect that future might assume, nothing should be wanting on her part to render it dignified and illustrious. Thus she was preparing—every day, ever hour preparing. As her children grew in beauty and in grace, they rewarded her solicitude by the exhibition of powers of mind scarcely inferior to her own. Here was hope. The present lost its loneliness to the young mother in the society and affection of her children. It lost its

gloom in their enjoyment. It lost its degradation in the exalted pursuits to which, as a family, they were devoted. Each passing moment thus became rich in value. Industry and constant application filled up the hours, and made them pass with rapid flight. All was energy and hope, because nothing was neglected which could in any way be rendered advantageous to the future, whether that future should be crowned with prosperity or shadowed by the gloom of adverse events.

While thus most rationally and prudently engaged, the mother was startled in her retirement by intelligence of a most exciting and momentous nature. The king, by whom the interests of her family had never been favourably regarded, was seized with fatal illness, and suddenly expired, leaving no child to succeed him on the throne. His cousin, the Duke of Orleans, brother to the late Count d'Angoulême, assumed the sovereign dignity, and he also was childless. Anne of Bretagne was now no longer to be feared or hated as a rival. It was now her turn to retire into obscurity, and, happily for her, she could take with her a more unblemished character than that which Louisa was about to assume. Naturally and reasonably, the mother of the young Francis might now raise her eyes to the throne as the future inheritance of her son. Louis XII. had long been married, but there was no offspring to create apprehensions in that quarter. The mother began to prepare more openly, by repairing to court at the invitation of the king, and neglecting no means by which her children might obtain the royal favour. Her hopes were legitimate; there was but one life between her son and the highest position in the realm.

The path of glory lay before her—open, and almost sure. Her favourable position was perceived by all who had so readily fallen in with the general tone of disrespect while the shadow lay upon her, but who now came forward to pay their flattering court to one who seemed likely, at no very distant day, to bask in unclouded sunshine. Mother and children both became popular at court. The king was delighted with the beauty, the grace, and the wonderful attainments of the latter; while the proudly gratified Louisa dispensed her fascinating smiles amongst all who were fortunate enough to conciliate her favour. What could there be to interrupt a career so prosperous and happy?

The king was married and childless. Yes; but royal marriages are sometimes set aside, and that with peculiar facility, when the dissolution of the tie is submitted to an infallible arbiter of good and evil; and here was only a weak, suffering, helpless woman in the case. Louis had been married three-and-twenty years, and, as he now discovered, from the first against his will. So between his Majesty the King, and his Holiness the Pope, they managed to get this affair of indissoluble union set aside, and then the monarch was at liberty to select another consort, "the world" being before him "where to choose." In all probability he had, like some other sovereigns, made his choice beforehand. At any rate, he lost but little time in making his selection known.

It is not difficult to imagine what must have been Louisa's state of mind during the period when these affairs were pending. Already participating in the

favour and the kindness of the monarch, she had gone so far as almost to place her children under his paternal care, by consulting his wishes in everything connected with their welfare, and especially in the choice of persons qualified to conduct the education of her son. But here was a blow which no calculation of the most sagacious mind could have taken into account; and it fell perhaps the more heavily, that it was one against which she had no right whatever to remonstrate, not even to complain. The calamity to her, however, was not yet complete. There were drops of peculiar bitterness remaining to be mingled with her disappointment; and still she must not complain. Anne of Bretagne, her former rival, was the lady selected to fill the vacant place of the discarded wife; and Louisa was again condemned to a second and inferior position, with all her burning hopes thrown back into subservience to this alliance.

In the seclusion of her widowhood, the society of Anne was sought by the king under the delicate pretext of residing at one of his castles in the vicinity of that to which she had retired. Louisa watched these proceedings in the distance. Anne was a woman of dignity and decorum, a real mourner, it was said, for her late husband. Perhaps she would reject the splendid offer, and spurn the lover who had so lightly broken a solemn contract of three-and-twenty years' endurance. Louisa was highly capable of sneering at those virtues which she was not meek enough to imitate; and it is not difficult to imagine the mingled scorn and rage with which she saw that Anne of Bretagne, even under these questionable circumstances, was willing to

accept the offer of a throne which she had so recently vacated. On the part of Louis, this proposal was in fact only the renewal of an old attachment, and might have required more magnanimity to repel than Louisa was aware of.

During the time when the king's matrimonial affairs were undecided, or rather hung in suspense between two women, one the object of his aversion, the other of his choice, his kindness towards Louisa and her children experienced no abatement. His pleasure seemed to be to do them both service and honour. The castle of Blois was appointed as their residence, and in all respects he appeared as if solicitous to make it understood, that they were under the immediate guardianship and protection of their royal relative. So far all was well. But no sooner had the king succeeded in his suit as a lover, and replaced Anne of Bretagne upon the throne, an event which took place in January 1499, than a change was made in these arrangements, and instead of Blois, the castle of Amboise was selected as the permanent residence of the widow and her children.

Anne of Bretagne was not only the exact age of Louisa, but she was equally, if not even more beautiful. She was a woman of haughty and commanding temper, yet so governed by an habitual regard for propriety and decorum, that the higher virtues of her character had nothing to obscure them, and she was consequently regarded, as a Queen, with feelings of universal love and admiration.

Louisa would have done well, had she imitated her rival in her high estimate of the virtues which adorn

the female character; but the conflicts and the rivalries of this period of her life seem to have drawn out into active operation all that was most violent and audacious in her own strongly constituted nature. She could not hold a court like that of Anne, because she was not a Queen; but she made a little court of her own, by drawing around her all that was most brilliant and gay amongst the younger nobility; and here she reigned supreme as the centre of that homage which her talents, her beauty, and her accomplishments so well fitted her to command. The long dormant passions of her nature, its slumbering ambition, its tremendous force of will, had all rushed into instantaneous life, as if roused into vitality by court favour and close contact with a throne. To rule and reign was the dominant impulse of her soul. But there was ever this redeeming feature in her character, ever this sweetest and most womanly trait,—she was true as a mother to her son. She did not grasp so tenaciously the reins of government as to make him but a puppet exhibited for show, while secretly worked and moved by her own hand. Hers was a loftier ambition and a nobler policy than this. She was determined, if her son should ever be a king, that he should also be a man; and thus, amidst all her gaiety, and pomp, and dissipation, his education was zealously pursued, and his interests in every respect attended to with the utmost solicitude and care.

In addition to other redeeming circumstances, it must not be forgotten, that Louisa's daughter was early distinguished by a refinement of taste and manners, as well as by an enlargement and maturity of intellect,

which rendered her in after-years one of the most remarkable and admirable of women. There was one shade upon her otherwise almost perfect character, but history has left us only one. And if it may in some measure be attributed to the laxity of her mother's little court, that Marguerite as an authoress was guilty of leaving on record lines which her best friends would fain have blotted out for ever; it ought in justice to be in some degree attributed also to her mother's influence and training, that she grew up with a mind so rightly balanced, so open to conviction, and so capable of the highest and purest sentiments, as to render her one of the first promoters of religious truth, at a time when there was nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by espousing the cause of the early reformers of the Church. Not that her mother partook in any way in these views on the subject of religious truth. Far otherwise; but she had opened and expanded the minds of her children, so as to fit them for receiving truth,—she had taught them to think and judge; she had introduced them to intercourse personal, and through the medium of literature, with the enlightened minds of men of superior understanding and attainments. She had consequently opened the way to their reception of the highest truth, whenever it should be presented to them; and to her daughter it came indeed, in a manner far different from any to which the mother's calculations or wishes had been directed.

Of the two children of Louisa, Marguerite appears to have been naturally endowed with by far the clearest and the deepest intellect, at the same time that her tastes were purer and more elevated than her bro-

ther's. Francis was brilliant, bold, and chivalrous,—Marguerite dignified and thoughtful, yet womanly, gentle, and of surpassing loveliness of person and character. Under the pressure of disappointment, the mother appears always to have turned to her children as the consolation and joy of her life, never wearying of their companionship. By both she was rewarded with the tenderest and most devoted affection; and such was the bond by which the three were drawn together, that, whether in joy or sorrow, in splendour or retirement, their close and uninterrupted union obtained for them in after-years the designation of the Trinity of France.

Whatever may have been the faults of Francis, and unquestionably he had his share, the unwavering stability of his attachment to his mother and sister was truly remarkable in one of a character naturally volatile like his; and to love devotedly two women so refined, accomplished, and superior to their sex in general, was no slight evidence of the soundness of his own judgment, as well as the goodness of his own heart.

As the brother and sister advanced to maturity, and began to take part in the selection of their own friends and companions, of whom they had now an extensive circle from which to choose, their discrimination and good sense were shown in the choice of such as would be likely to shed lustre upon their future years. Francis, a favourite at his uncle's court, learned there the gallant bearing and polished manners which female society of the highest tone is so well calculated to promote; and when he returned, for the purpose of pursuing his studies in the comparative retirement of

Amboise, he was always permitted to take with him a party of young nobles of similar tastes and habits, whose society might enliven his home, and whose pursuits might stimulate his own. Gaston de Foix was one of these, and Charles de Montpensier, afterwards Constable of France, with many other youths of distinction, amongst whom was Anne de Montmorency, the especial friend of Marguerite in after-years. With these, her brother's intimate associates, Marguerite was thrown into frequent and somewhat familiar companionship; and an accomplished girl of her beauty and rank was not likely to remain long thus situated without her admirers. Throughout her whole life, however, this high-minded woman appears to have escaped in a wonderful manner all contamination from the licentiousness of the age in which she lived, and to have moved in the brilliant and not very scrupulous court of her brother, rather like a star to be gazed at from the distance, than a being to be approached with the familiarity of ordinary pretensions. Her own intercourse, too, was more freely shared with men of piety and learning, than with the mere gallants of the court; and as the troubled and conflicting interests of the times began to assume the religious aspect which opened the way to the great events of the Reformation, Marguerite's decided adherence to the cause which at that time only included the most earnest and deeply experienced Christians, must have secured for her a line of marked separation from the gayer and more licentious portion of the society by which she was necessarily surrounded.

In the early period of her second marriage, the

Queen had given birth to two sons, who both died; and her distress at this calamity was heightened by a proposal which found favour with every one but herself, that her daughter Claude should be affianced to the young Francis, upon whom the king, amongst other favours, conferred the title of Duke de Valois. This alliance was one which Louisa was not likely to disapprove; but such were the constant bickerings and disputes between her and the Queen, and such the irritable and embittered feeling with which both these haughty women endured the frequent contact to which their relative positions subjected them, that many years elapsed before Anne could be prevailed upon to yield her consent to the union. It was indeed a great giving up on the part of one whose prejudices were naturally strong, and who had so little cause to look favourably upon the mother, that she might be readily excused for entertaining no very amiable feelings towards the son. The Queen, too, had projects of her own with regard to her daughter, and she was not accustomed to give up very readily any point on which her heart was set. The son of Philip and Joanna of Spain, afterwards so celebrated as the Emperor Charles V., was the selection which she had made. State reasons, however, of great weight, were so placed before her, that at last she yielded a reluctant consent, and in the year 1506 Louisa and her children were called to attend at court for the celebration of the ceremony of betrothment, which was conducted with becoming splendour, and hailed with popular applause.

But although Anne had consented to this union,

her mind was ill at ease, and she kept her daughter always at her side, as if afraid of contact with a family so repugnant to her tastes. To the Countess d'Angoulême she attributed the blame of this thwarting of her will; and as this lady had so efficiently provided her daughter with a husband, she determined, womanlike, to return the compliment by herself finding a husband for Louisa's daughter. Many gentlemen of distinction were proposed for this alliance, the Queen assuming considerable authority in the selection or refusal of each. At one time it was the Archduke Charles of Austria, upon whom this prize was to be bestowed; at another negotiations for a similar purpose were opened with Henry of England, whose father, happily for Marguerite, had other projects for his son. At last the Duke d'Alençon, recommended only by rank and circumstances, not by any merits of his own beyond bravery and other personal endowments, was the husband to whom Marguerite was consigned, brilliant in beauty and in talent, and only then in her seventeenth year. With this companion, who proved uncongenial to her in almost every respect, and who, not insensible to her charms, seems to have guarded her with a kind of jealous care, she retired to his castle in Normandy, there to endure an almost hopeless separation from the friends whose society had given zest to all her enjoyments, and from those favourite pursuits which she had no longer the privilege of sharing with any congenial mind.

The mother of Francis must have welcomed the fulfilment of her crowning hope in an event which at this time threw the whole nation into the deepest sorrow.

The death of Anne, their beloved and honoured queen, took place in January, 1514. The king was disconsolate, never to be comforted again. Perpetual mourning seemed to be the order of the court. All amusements were forbidden, and no one was to approach the royal presence, unless clothed in vestments of the profoundest woe.

There was one heart, however, in which it is scarcely to be supposed that grief would lie so heavily as to be very burdensome; nor had the Countess d'Angoulême sufficient self-command to conceal the eagerness with which she rushed upon that field of influence which the death of the Queen had left open to her occupation. Indeed, a strange anomaly prevailed throughout the whole of this woman's life. She was wise only in relation to her children. Towards them alone would her conduct bear inspection. At the court of the bereaved monarch she soon became so domineering and audacious, that the nobles were offended, and the king himself annoyed with her interference and assumption. It seems as if the long pent-up hopes and passions of Louisa changed her whole nature on her near approach to the possession of unbounded power. She could master them in adversity. She could keep them down when she herself was mastered by any strong influence above her; but especially her intense and never wavering affection for her children subdued the lofty spirit to a kind of allegiance which produced the most salutary effects upon her own character, and upon the happiness of those around her. Without such restraining influence, the latent fire of indomitable pride burst forth, and its

course was marked by the devastation of all peace, and the overthrow of all power except her own.

Such Louisa showed herself during the brief space of her influence at court, before the king was consoled. And that space was very brief indeed, considering the depth of his affliction, and the forcible and touching manner in which it was manifested; for not only had he retired into perfect seclusion, there the more copiously to give vent to his tears and lamentations, but such was the general observance of the calamity by which the nation was overwhelmed, that even on the occasion of the final solemnization of the marriage of Francis with the Princess Claude, the relatives and courtiers were arrayed in long robes of black cloth, no sign of outward festivity or rejoicing being permitted.*

Scarcely recovering from the shadow of this deep and heavy gloom, in which she alone had been unable to sympathize, the mother of Francis must have listened with sensations of a very peculiar nature to hints and surmises soon spreading too rapidly, but all bearing the same burthen, that the reigning sovereign was about to share his heart and throne with another wife,—a young, beautiful, and distinguished woman, the sister of Henry VIII. of England. Every tongue was eloquent in praise of Mary's beauty and engaging manners, both which, in addition to the advantageous connection with such a brother, had been the bait held out in various negotiations with foreign powers; and now at last the princess was to be sent over, with all her rich dower of youth and beauty, and glowing heart of love (already plighted), to be sacrificed to the fancy

* Life of Marguerite d'Angoulême.

of an old king, whose failing health barely sufficed to drag him through the long protracted splendour of the nuptial festivities.

Perhaps this was not the least reconcilable part of the contract to the young and lovely bride, who gracefully applied herself to all those tender offices required by her suffering consort. The ceremonies on this occasion were extended beyond the accustomed period of display. Louisa looked on with envious, and, some say, malignant eyes. There was ample room for court gossip, for Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, was one of the illustrious train of English nobles in attendance upon the lovely bride. Nothing, however, transpired to feed the hunger of malicious tongues. Mary was perfect, both in her beauty, her gracious manners, and in her attentions to her sovereign lord. Louisa could only hide her diminished head, and "bide her time."

That time came sooner than could have been anticipated, but not too soon for the bounding hearts of the two women whose interests had been most deeply implicated in the marriage plot. Louis VII. expired on the first day of the year 1515, twelve months after the death of his beloved Anne, and two after his marriage with Mary.

The most affectionate intercourse had always subsisted between Francis and his uncle, who, in taking leave of him on his death-bed, had committed to him the future charge of his kingdom and people, with every demonstration on both sides of the sincerest confidence and tenderest regard. Francis was crowned at Rheims, on the 25th of January, 1515; and never perhaps did any youthful monarch ascend a throne

with higher expectations, not confined in the present instance to his own people, but shared by all surrounding nations.

Louisa was now at last and indeed at the crowning point of her ambition. Her utmost hopes had so long been centred here, so often frustrated, as it seemed, effectually, and then again revived, only to be overthrown again, that a woman of less spirit might have learned almost to despair. Not so this bold, undaunted soul. Indeed, it is reported of her, that she always cherished a secret confidence that her son would reign, even through all the vicissitudes which had sometimes thrown this event out of the range of all human probability. The Countess d'Angoulême, with all her masculine abilities and force of will, was superstitious· and she had dreams which strengthened her belief in the illustrious career of her son. Inaccessible to conviction regarding true religion, reckless of all its restraining influence, she was addicted to certain superstitious practices, and was credulous of falsehood, when presented to her in certain forms. Again we must repeat that only towards her children was Louisa wise or good.

Indispensable as the two were to each other, Marguerite left her retirement on her brother's accession to the throne, to hold indisputably her honoured place at his court, ever nearest to his person as she was always to his heart. Indeed, the love of the brother and sister, with the entireness of their union, though differing in sentiments on many important points, has no parallel in history. Even the imperious mother yielded precedence here; while the enthusiastic

admiration of the son for the mingled charms and virtues of his sister, never, through all the vicissitudes of his after-life, gave place to any stronger or deeper attachment. In this we behold another striking feature of Louisa's influence over her children. Jealous and requiring in her own demands upon the affection or the homage of others, she was always willing so far to give place here, that Marguerite was allowed to stand even before herself in the love and the confidence of the son whom she idolized. But this precedence was granted to Marguerite alone. The meek-spirited and patient wife was too often made to fall back into insignificance, sorely harassed, one can readily believe, by necessary contact with such a mother-in-law; while Marguerite, ever true to the better feelings of her sex, consoled the gentle, and perhaps sometimes slighted Claude, by faithfully supporting her dignity in public, and in private not less faithfully treating her with all the affection of a sister.

The same right feeling was evinced by the Duchess d'Alençon in promoting the interests and the rank of her husband. Whatever he might be to her, she was determined that he should enjoy his share of public honour and distinction. She therefore obtained for him, as one of the first acts of the new sovereign, the appointment of Governor of Normandy; and, in addition to other marks of favour, he was publicly recognized as standing nearest in rank to the throne.

While Marguerite was attending to these arrangements for her husband, the young king was thinking of his mother. First in her claims upon his grateful affection, he lost no time in placing her in the most

exalted position in the realm. No sooner were his own rights thoroughly established, than he conferred upon Louisa the title of Duchess d'Angoulême, de Valois, and d'Anjou, with the hereditary patrimony of Angoulême for her possession; and at the same time he decreed that she should hold equal rank in the kingdom with himself.

The edict published on this occasion, and which we extract from the work so frequently alluded to, is well worthy of notice. It is as follows;—

"Desiring to show homage to our very dear and very loved lady and mother, the Duchess d'Angoulême and d'Anjou; considering that while we remained under her care, government, and administration, she carefully and affectionately brought us up, and caused us to be well and diligently instructed in all good and virtuous morals; for which causes we therefore hold ourselves bound in honour and duty to impart and bestow upon her the highest honours and privileges of our realm."

How many sons on their first accession to dignity and power forget the mothers who watched over their childhood! Sometimes they have nearer friends whom they more delight to honour. Sometimes they find more distinguished objects, by honouring whom they make themselves sure of being honoured in return. But Francis, in the first flush of his new glory, while yet the crown was strange upon his brow, gave honour to his mother; and in such manner, that no subject in his realm could dispute the claims which he had taken care thus publicly to substantiate. Besides this noble testimony to the reverence which he considered due to the guide and counsellor of his early years, many other marks of favour were bestowed by

Francis with equal publicity, all doing honour to his own heart, and equal honour to his judgment, had Louisa, when in power, been the same woman that she was in obscurity.

Nor did the right feeling of the son rest satisfied with what was done for his mother alone. In conjunction with his sister, he sought out the companions of their early days; the friends who had shared their favourite studies; and next to these, the most learned and distinguished men of their acquaintance, upon whom to bestow either tokens of their gratitude, or appropriate marks of their esteem and admiration. Not merely men of rank were invited to share these honours, but many grave, deep-thinking men, for whose society Marguerite always evinced the strongest preference; and with some of whom she afterwards shared those deeper interests which belong to questions of religious importance. In this selection and distribution of royal favour, Marguerite had no doubt her full share, one proof of which was the remembrance of her especial friend Montmorency. Indeed, none were forgotten amongst the companions who had shared their intimacy, at a time when there was little honour, and no profit to be gained by attachment to this neglected family.

Perhaps there have been few pictures presented by history more beautiful than this, of a brother just raised to the throne of a vast and powerful empire, with a sister by his side, thus calling to mind their early friendships, remembering past kindnesses, and dispensing the first proofs of their good feeling, before the bloom should fade from their gratitude, or the

ardour of their glowing hearts be cooled by contact with the world, and its conflicting influences. Nor ought the mother to be left out of the picture. Her presence was always necessary to render it complete. Even Louisa was still so young as to look like an elder sister, and all were so wonderfully gifted with personal charms and graces, that even in private life they would have formed a trio of extraordinary beauty. What then must have been their attractions, at a court, which soon became the centre of all that was most elegant in taste, most polished in manners, as well as most brilliant in arms?

Whatever might be wanting in Francis of that depth and stability which belonged so peculiarly to his sister's character, he undoubtedly possessed qualities which rendered him eminently attractive as a prince. Facile, accomplished, and eloquent, he could persuade and win, where it would have been wiser to resist; and while regardless of principle, he had that extraordinary daring, and impetuous force of action, which always claims weight at the moment, even when opposed to more guarded and sagacious movements. Thus, if history has little to record of Francis which can justly place him in the rank of men truly great, it is not difficult, when looking around upon the times and the circumstances in which he lived, to understand how he might have been a mark for the admiration of all beholders, accustomed as people then were to regard as the highest objects in life the pomp of ceremony, the daring of enterprise, the conquest obtained by bravery, or the clash and the tumult of battle even without its victory.

If Louisa failed to make her son all, or indeed anything which the more mature opinions of the present times can approve, she succeeded in making him all which she herself admired, and which was then most popular with the world in general. So far his mother's part was faithfully and successfully performed. That her own standard of excellence was false, does not militate against the legitimate power, and the well-selected means by which her purpose was accomplished. There seems to have been naturally a marked difference between her two children as regards worth and weight of character. But they had both the same training—both the same maternal influence, never withdrawn, but constantly operating upon their childhood and youth. We are at liberty therefore to attribute chiefly to the purer influences derived from religious principle and association in after years, that marked distinction by which the inner life of Marguerite was separated, not only from that of her brother, but also from the corruptions of a court whose greatest ornament she remained to be, long after she had ceased to find pleasure in its allurements.

It was in perfect keeping with the martial spirit of Francis, that he should seize the earliest opportunity to distinguish himself in arms. Such distinction was the highest glory of the times in which he lived. He was young, powerful, and brave: an open field was before him. All that was noble and gallant in his court and kingdom was at his service and command. In this spirit he set out on his first warlike expedition, attended with all the pomp of a more than usually splendid retinue. His object was the conquest of the

Milanese, and the chastisement of the Swiss, who had trespassed, as he supposed, upon his territory. As far as Lyons he was accompanied in this expedition by his mother and sister, with many noble princes and men of valour, under whose command he placed the different divisions of his gallant army.

But there is no sufficient purpose to be answered by following the young king in these his favourite exploits, or attempting to trace out the complicated policy by which the interests of the different courts of Europe were at that time distracted and confused. The mother's part is that to which our attention must be confined, and we have consequently to return to the Duchess, or *Madame*, as she was significantly called, and behold her returning with power and majesty as her son's deputed regent, to wield the sceptre of state during the period of his absence.

Against this appointment the people had remonstrated with great urgency, but Francis would not yield. In his mother's wisdom and competency he had himself the most entire confidence; and he was determined that she should occupy the highest position which it was in his power to bestow. But the wisdom, and even the virtue, which satisfied the son, were not so apparent to his parliament. It is possible that Madame herself was a very different person as a mother, from what she was as a regent. Certain it is, that while openly feared and obeyed, she was secretly hated, and that to such a degree as to be the cause of lasting disunion and hostility between the king and his parliament. Looking at one side of the picture of Louisa's life then, we behold her governing,

it is true, with some discretion, but without affection from the people, who most unwillingly submitted to her arbitrary rule; on the other we see her, on receiving the first tidings of the splendid victory achieved by her son, performing a pilgrimage on foot to the shrine of Notre Dame des Fontaines, to commend afresh, to the especial care of Heaven, him whom, to use her own words, she "loved better than herself."*

That was saying a great deal, but it was not more than the truth. The happy trio were again united on the king's return; and with unabated affection for each other, again directed their combined attention to the reward of merit, and to the encouragement of all which in their opinion was most likely to reflect honour on the nation and the sovereign. Notwithstanding his recent success, and the celebrity which his own gallant conduct in the war had won for the young king, he was not indifferent to the importance of learning; and eminent men distinguished by their mental endowments, especially if favourites with his sister, received the most flattering attention from both. A marked improvement was by this means effected in the popular estimate of merit; and to the Duchess d'Alençon, as well as to her mother, may chiefly be attributed the favour bestowed at the court of Francis upon letters and knowledge in general, such favour having previously been exclusively monopolized by high birth and military distinction alone.

A great project at this time occupied the minds of the trio, as advantageous in its bearing upon the improvement of the people, as it was creditable to them-

* Life of Marguerite d'Angoulême.

selves. This was the founding of a College in Paris, to which a vast number of students were to be admitted, to receive instruction under professors from different countries, in all languages and sciences, both ancient and modern. With a spirit boldly opposed to the narrow views at that time prevailing amongst churchmen in general, it was decided that Greek, Hebrew, and Latin should be the first and most honourable attainments. For this purpose, Francis himself frankly offered a munificent endowment: and the institution was to be called the Collége Royale. Many earnest consultations were held in furtherance of this most praiseworthy design, at that time no less startling in its novelty than momentous in its import. A suitable director or head was the chief object of consideration, and for this important office the choice fell upon Erasmus, whose theological writings had probably even then made considerable impression upon the mind of Marguerite. The proposal was no new mark of public esteem to this great scholar, but unambitious man, whose delight was in the repose of private study, not in the struggles of public distinction; and he therefore consulted his taste in declining the splendid offers of Francis, as he already had done many of a similar kind. The project was consequently suspended for a time, but afterwards revived, and carried out under a somewhat modified form.

The reign of Francis, so remarkably prosperous in its commencement, was soon clouded by disasters, some of which could never have been provided against; others were but too evidently attributable to his own rashness and self-will; while others still, and perhaps

the most calamitous, might be traced to the underworking of the restless and vindictive passions of his mother, whose hate was strong and deep and lasting as her love.

So early as the year 1519 an enemy and rival appeared in the field, with whose deep policy the volatile and fiery Francis was in few respects calculated to cope. Charles V., in assuming the imperial crown, for which so many princes contended, united under his sceptre so vast an extent of empire, as to render him a formidable opponent to any of the reigning powers. But the stern discipline of his early life, and something in the severity and coolness of his own self-governed nature, rendered him so peculiarly unlike Francis, as to be incapable of becoming his friend, and yet unconquerable as his enemy.

With the life-long struggles of these rival powers we have no desire to meddle. Their bloody conflicts, their false reconciliations, and their broken treaties, remain a blot upon the page of history. The under-movements, instigated by female influence, come more appropriately into notice; and here it becomes necessary to regard the character of Louisa under the darkest shadow which it ever wore. In her capacity of regent, Madame was reckless of consequences, as she was of principle, provided she had any private end to serve; and she wielded her power through the Chancellor Duprat, her favourite adviser, with a facility which rendered both almost equally odious in the grasping cupidity of the one, and the unhesitating self-will of the other. Perhaps the young king had not calculated when he placed his mother in this position

that no other woman must share his personal favour besides herself and her daughter; and it was to revenge the unpardonable offence of one who had thus far presumed, that Louisa, on one occasion, committed the iniquitous act of withholding the supplies which had been promised and relied upon for the relief of the Milanese; and then, to conceal her own part in this heinous transaction, of allowing the fault to be attributed to another, where no blame was due. By this base act of treachery the honour of her son was tarnished, a brave commander sacrificed, and a battle lost; and all for hatred to a woman!

The whole career of this extraordinary and highly gifted woman might teach a lesson to those who would give the sex an equal share with men in parliaments and state councils, and even in battles. Louisa possessed a masculine understanding, and indomitable energy. She was always equal to the occasion, when such qualities were required. If she was wanting in principle, so are many men who yet can govern, and, according to the world's estimate, govern well. But just in proportion as the female character, if strongly moved by impulse of any kind, is sure to be moved in the direction of love or hate; so far are women liable to forget the comprehensive purpose of the politician in the closer interests of the wife, the mother, or it may be only the rival.

But there was yet to be a trial of Louisa's fortitude, for which she was but little prepared; and it was one respecting which she was compelled to hide much of the bitterness within her own bosom; so that no clear record remains of the exact transactions which took

place on the memorable defection of the Duke de Bourbon from the interests of France.

Both Louisa and her daughter, probably in conjunction with other courtly dames at that time enjoying power, appear to have had their especial favourites amongst the men of rank who stood nearest to the throne, and they seem to have faithfully served the interests of these friends according to the manners of the times, without suspicion or blame. Montmorency, as already stated, was Marguerite's *protégé*, and from the grave and somewhat stern demeanour of this nobleman, and the pure and almost brotherly intercourse which for many years subsisted between him and his patroness, it would have scarcely been possible for the most envious to extract sufficient cause for blame. The *protégé* of the mother was the famous Duke de Bourbon, better known as the Constable of France, a man whose haughty and undaunted spirit, allied to his immense wealth and ostentatious habits, rendered him at once formidable as an enemy, and audacious as a friend.

It was a curious part of this system of patronage, that the ladies took especial care in providing suitable wives for their favourites; and in the marriage of the Duke de Bourbon with his cousin, who was the heiress of vast possessions, Louisa acted more as a mother than a mere friend, although the bridegroom was not ten years younger than herself.

In some respects the dispositions of the duke and his lady-patroness were not dissimilar. Both were self-willed, haughty and imperious; and the whole period of their intercourse seems to have been marked

by continual contentions, accompanied at times with that irony and bitterness of expression which is generally supposed to belong to hate, not love. That it *was* hate on one side seems more than probable; on the other we are not quite so sure. That the two were perpetually quarrelling, was at least evident to all; and Francis, who liked to surround himself with gay and easy tempers, such as might readily reflect his own good humour, whenever he was in the mood to be pleased, would have been glad had these contentious spirits been less easily reconciled, so that his court might have been spared the presence of one whose pride, whose power, and whose splendid appointments were sometimes displayed in so gorgeous a manner as to cast even royalty into shade.

When the Constable became a widower, retaining all the possessions of his deceased wife, he abated nothing of his pomp and pride. It is said that he even aspired so high as to solicit in marriage the hand of the sister of the queen. This was peremptorily refused by the king; and about the same time, it is also said, that by way of ensuring the adherence of so wealthy and powerful an ally, proposals were made to the proud duke, which would have placed him still nearer to the throne. His haughty rejection of these overtures, and the consequences which ensued, were fatal alike to his own interests and to those of France.

Insulted as Louisa felt herself by the scornful expressions which the Constable so daringly associated with her name, she immediately became his bitterest enemy, and instituted a suit against him, by which, if successful, a large portion of his possessions would fall

into her own hands. For the carrying out of this purpose she not only engaged the king on her side, but resorted to means which outraged all precedent and law. It was but too evident, that her determined spirit would never rest without the utmost demands of her vindictive nature being satisfied. The Constable knew with whom he had to deal. Harassed and annoyed at court, disgraced in the field by being compelled to resign his command to one who was greatly his inferior in arms, he suffered these insults and mortifications to chafe his temper and distract his mind, until at last the fatal resolution was adopted, of forsaking his country and his sovereign altogether.

As already said, there was now a powerful rival on the theatre of action, ever watchful and ever ready to seize the advantage of the moment, when Francis should fail in judgment, offend a powerful subject, or in any other way lay himself open to an enemy, either at home or abroad. Charles was not ignorant of what was taking place with regard to the Constable of France; and, rightly judging that to gain such a man over to his own interests, would be to strike the severest blow it would be possible for him to inflict upon his rival, he is said to have made such overtures, that the duke was at last induced to take this irrevocable step; and before the king was awake to the immediate danger of losing him for ever, the Constable had escaped privately to Spain, where he was received with all the honour which it was possible for the nation or the sovereign to bestow,—honour which included that customary gift of kings, the hand of the nearest female relative. In this instance, however, the

gift so disposed of and so little prized, proved nothing more than a bait, and the subsequent fate of the haughty rebel might have taught a wholesome lesson to all discontented subjects, disposed to listen to the tempting promises of a rival sovereign.

Louisa, too, might have exulted in secret, could she have foreseen the end. But for the time, all was consternation at the court of her son; and, with regard to herself, despite her wounded pride, her just indignation, and her thirst for revenge, her great spirit seems to have failed her when she ought to have been strongest. We learn that about this time she became ill, dispirited, and, to some extent, broken down. For the first time she was seized with a malady, to which, from this period of her life, she became increasingly subject. Marguerite was in constant attendance beside her mother's couch of suffering, watching with the most anxious solicitude those alternations of tumult and despair to which the anguish of a wounded spirit gave poignancy and depth. The bodily pain which Louisa endured was sometimes excruciating; but this she could bear with heroic fortitude, suppressing the outward evidence of what she was enduring, out of regard for her tender and devoted nurse. Here Louisa was again her better self. No calamity of this kind could subdue her into littleness. Affliction seemed ever to be to her, as it is to many, a bitter but wholesome medicine. Indeed, so softening was its influence at this time upon her character, that Marguerite, whose own mind had become more earnestly directed to religious interests, was permitted to urge their claims upon her mother, who now evinced scme desire

to listen to the reading of a portion of the Scriptures, a translation of which had recently been placed in Marguerite's hand. She was sorely in need of those sources of true peace of which her daughter had already tasted. The tumult of her soul was too wild to be subdued by any other means. In the stillness of her chamber she was pursued by guilty memories; and she had still a heart to feel, though wanting the humility to submit.

As a proof of this, we have only to turn over another page of the picture, and there we behold her in the midst of the infant family of Francis, devoting her whole energies to the recovery of a sick child, or weeping over the couch of suffering infancy. Such scenes were not unfrequent with Louisa; and when melted to tenderness by sympathy for those she loved, or subdued by the anguish of her own frequently recurring malady, it must have been difficult to believe her the same woman as the imperious mistress or the revengeful rival.

These moments of tenderness must have been occasions fraught with deep interest to Marguerite. Much that was then transpiring in the outer world, in relation to the church, was known and understood by her. She was deeply implicated in that reform for which all eyes were now looking. The friends of the Reformation, indeed, were her friends, and she was theirs; and while she prayed for their success, she could see from her exalted position the fearful conflict likely to ensue from a more open declaration of sentiments differing materially from those of Rome. Already, indeed, the flames of persecution had been lighted. John Huss had laid down his life; but then the authority of the

Sorbonne was shaken. Luther was abroad, and at work with his fearless pen; but then, some of the most forward professors of the new faith had recanted under the torture of their persecutors. All things were tending towards some grand conclusion; but then, the prospect was fraught with evil as well as good. It was impossible for a nature so earnest and yet so sensitive as Marguerite's to remain unmoved. Sometimes hope must have pointed to her mother, in her best moments, as not unlikely to become the powerful instrument for adjusting the balance. Sometimes, and perhaps more frequently, it pointed to her brother. If they, or even one of them, could be brought to see and feel with her, what a blessed era might then dawn upon her country, and, from the centre of influence in France, irradiate other nations!

Marguerite has always been described as possessing an extraordinary amount of tact, without which, in addition to her lively fancy and her sparkling wit, it would have been impossible for her to exercise that influence over her brother, which scarcely failed until the close of her life. Habitually aided by this tact, she knew exactly how far to go in urging the claims of the Reformation, and in pleading for the safety of its adherents. For some time this happy influence on the part of the sister gave promise of being most advantageous to her friends. She could rouse her brother to indignation against hyprocrisy and abuse on the one side, if she could not win him over to conviction on the other; and, to a certain extent, even with Francis, this power, so skilfully exercised, was salutary. But the hopes of Marguerite were doomed

never to be fulfilled. Mother and brother alike failed her, each going their separate way,—the latter in pursuit of the policy or pleasure of the passing moment the former leaning more decidedly to the pomp, the authority, and the superstition of the Romish Church. It was, in fact, much more consistent with Louisa's character to maintain these views. The humility of a purer Christianity was as adverse to her as its charity and its forbearance; and, above all, she was unprepared to subject her inclinations and her will to the requirements of its just and holy laws. Thus the season of hope passed over. The health of the mother was for a time restored; her energies recovered; and the daughter had to pursue her Christian course unsupported and alone, amidst the flattering homage of admiring thousands.

The gloom which must at times have overspread the otherwise brilliant path of Marguerite was deepened by the declining health of the queen—the gentle Claude, and Marguerite's true sister. After the birth of her seventh child, she had sunk gradually and resignedly, dying in the month of June, 1524, and leaving behind her a character adorned by many private virtues, which, during life, she had never been solicitous to render prominent.

With an affection little less than maternal, Marguerite from this time took charge of her brother's children, watching over them, and even providing for their welfare, with a degree of authority which she was well aware their father would never call in question. Indeed, Francis had now more than enough upon his hands with the complicated dangers which threatened

his country on every side. Bourbon was a restless enemy; and in alliance with the Emperor Charles V. a plan was laid for invading France with a power so overwhelming, that the utmost precaution was necessary to meet the coming blow. Francis, like his mother, was always at his best when assailed by disaster, or roused into prompt and vigorous action by some great emergency. Never was prince or warrior more brave in battle: and even in defeat he was courteous as a gentleman, and dignified as a king.

But the events of this momentous period are too well known to be further noticed here. One fact is remarkable, as regards the mother of Francis, that she seems to have suffered from a kind of apprehension—almost a presentiment—that if he passed the boundary of his own kingdom, his safety would be endangered, and some terrible disaster would ensue. But Francis knew no danger, and he was almost as great a stranger to prudence. Flushed with hope and confidence by the first success of his army, his enthusiasm passed all bounds of caution. The aspect of the invasion, indeed, soon began to look less formidable than at first. The leaders of the Spanish force were Bourbon and Pescara. The haughty rebel was not a likely man to act in concert with the Spanish nobles, who looked with jealous hate upon his intrusion amongst them; nor was a traitor, who had just deserted from his lawful sovereign, more likely to be regarded with confidence by Charles. Thus, envy and discord in the imperial army offered advantages to their opponents which they were not slow to follow up; and, fired with the ardour of victory, Francis pushed onward to the scene

of those fatal disasters by which the battle of Pavia is rendered one of the most memorable in history.

A captive, in the power of his enemy, Francis conducted himself with a majesty of mind and bearing little less than heroic; but, unfortunately, he was a stranger to the noble virtue of sincerity, and in this respect the two opposing powers were more equal than in any other point of rivalry. Scarcely less wearisome than disgusting is the long tissue of reiterated falsehoods which characterize the conditions proposed on both sides between these two sovereigns, many of which were never intended to be kept, the wily Charles each time reaping some advantage from the weariness and impatience of his royal prisoner.

And all the while the disastrous and complicated affairs of France, as a nation, were left to the management of two women, upon whose hearts, too, sorrow was lying heavily, as well as care. Perhaps they did not work less earnestly or efficiently for that. But Marguerite had a sorrow deeper and more poignant than her mother's. Her husband was returning from the field of conflict covered with disgrace and shame. He had fled without a wound, and that at the very crisis when the troops he commanded might have saved their king. How these two women, with the tears yet wet upon their cheeks, must have loathed the sight of that craven-spirited man, when at last he crept into their presence, the hooting and contempt of the people of Lyons having announced his entrance into the city! The Duke d'Alençon was ill, as well as wretched, but neither mother nor daughter would receive him with any marks of recognition. He became

more ill, and Marguerite remembered the precepts of that book which had become the support and consolation of her troubled soul. Crushing down her high throbbing heart, and shrouding her indignant spirit under the garb of duty, she visited the dying man, and not only remained beside him as his constant and devoted nurse, but even undertook the delicate and painful task of so far interceding with her brother on his behalf, that her husband, who lived just long enough for the return of letters from Francis, had the consolation of knowing, in the hour of death, that he was forgiven by him towards whom he had acted so unmanly and unfaithful a part.

We read of no such instance of relenting on the part of Louisa, who remained a stranger to those chastening influences by which Marguerite's character was purified and adorned. Again entrusted with the full power of the regency, this undaunted woman set herself, with strong purpose of heart, to serve her son's best interests, as she believed, by restoring his kingdom, so far as was possible, to a condition of greater prosperity; and this time she filled her responsible office with more prudence than before, because she was now set loose from every other interest which could have interfered in any way with that of her son. For him she now worked, contended, conquered, and lived. Under the first shock produced by the tidings of his fate at Pavia, she had abandoned herself to a perfect passion of grief; but once restored to comparative composure, she became alive to every claim, watchful of every danger to the state, and, as usual, equal to every difficulty. Her prudence, however, was a purely

worldly prudence; her energy reckless of the sacrifice of life, as well as principle. Now, indeed, Marguerite must have lost all idea of ever influencing her mother in the direction to which her own brightest hopes were turned. Louisa looked around her with the shrewd gaze of one who calculates mere chances, regardless of all moral or religious law; and seeing that the most favourable lay on the side of conciliation and amity with the Pope and the Church of Rome, she renounced all appearance of toleration towards the opposite party; and, making only one exception in the case of her daughter, denounced the reformers as a body, and prohibited their worship. Under the advice of their most implacable enemies, she even consented to those cruel persecutions which marked the period of her rule with blood and horror. Little did she care who suffered if her son was saved. She would have signed a warrant for the burning of the Pope himself, had it been in her power by such an act to save her son, and restore him to his kingdom with undiminished glory.

The skill and sagacity of Louisa's government during the long period of her son's captivity, is universally acknowledged. Her unsparing bigotry and cruelty towards those who, as she believed, stood in the way of the great object of her life, must in common fairness be attributed, not entirely to her want of principle, but in some measure to the absorbing nature of that passionate affection with which she regarded those who stood within a certain line of relationship to herself.

As usual in the negotiation of princes, the terms of liberation so often proposed, and so often with-

drawn, between Charles and his captive, included the fairest hands, and the most richly endowed, which could be offered in marriage on either side. Eleanor, sister to the emperor, and a widow, was of course thrown into the bargain; while the accomplished and high-souled Marguerite, now also a widow, was subjected to the same humiliation; so far at least as to the mention of her name, not for the first time, in alliance with that of Charles. Louisa was not improbably delighted to have so splendid a bribe as her daughter Marguerite to offer; and, eager to accomplish her part in the transaction, she proposed, for this purpose, a meeting with the emperor at Narbonne.

This project, however, like so many others concocted for the same purpose, fell to the ground; and in the meantime the Duke de Bourbon, who found it impossible to attach himself to his new master, obtained private interviews with the king of France, in which plans were agreed upon between him and Francis, that would have subsequently restored him to all he had voluntarily lost in France, and more, indeed, than he had ever been rich enough to possess; for the hand of Marguerite, which the emperor did not appear particularly eager to claim, was to be added to his possessions. But this also failed; and some more decisive measures were adopted by the removal of the captive into Spain. Such, indeed, were the personal attractions and the gracious bearing of Francis, that he became too popular with those who were admitted to converse with him; the spectacle of a captive king, who was at the same time gallant, young, and grace-

ful, adding no inconsiderable charm to the interest with which he was regarded. It was therefore deemed more prudent to place him in the immediate vicinity of the court of Spain.

Amidst the mighty movements which agitated Europe at this period, it is curious to observe how much, in relation to France, was committed to the courage, as well as the skill, of two accomplished women, one of them peculiarly sensitive and feminine in her feelings and general demeanour. A project was now on foot, by which it would be tested how far these qualities are compatible with the utmost personal, as well as moral, bravery. An ambassador was wanted at the court of Spain; for to the inexpressible chagrin of Francis, the emperor refused to grant him an interview, even when he had been conducted so far as to Madrid. Marguerite's friend Montmorency was charged with these arrangements. Who was there to send of sufficient worth to be trusted, of sufficient wisdom to be relied upon, or of sufficient union of mind and interest with the captive king to enter with both parties into their entire and most intimate confidence? Marguerite herself was the only individual in whom these essential qualifications could be found; and she was ready for the call of duty. In her alone the mother could implicitly confide; to her she could unfold every wish and purpose of her heart; and while, on the other hand, the king felt equal assurance that his interests could not be committed to wiser or safer keeping, he had become so worn and wasted with protracted endurance, that he longed, with almost boyish ardour, to embrace again the

beloved sister who had been the joy of his whole life.

The noble enterprise of this illustrious lady; the sufferings of her brother under the combined influences of sickness and disappointment; the true dignity of his demeanour during the interview at last vouchsafed him by Charles, when apparently on the confines of death; the meeting of the brother and sister; the long delay; the alternations of hope and fear; and, lastly, the escape, when almost despaired of, from the land of his imprisonment, are circumstances which the reader will find minutely and graphically described in the Life of Marguerite d'Angoulême. For ourselves, we must return to the mother; not, however, to distract the attention of the reader with those conflicts amongst various and contending parties at home, which must have rendered the position of the regent one of such difficulty as sometimes almost to baffle that brave and commanding spirit by which the affairs of the state were then governed.

After all the harassing fatigues, both of body and mind, to which Marguerite had been subjected, she returned unaltered in character—unimpaired, there is reason to believe, either in loveliness, or in the power of loving. The first domestic news with which she was greeted conveyed intelligence of the illness of her brother's children. After a very short interview with the regent, she therefore set out immediately to take her accustomed place amongst them, as their nurse and mother. Both ladies, however, were soon startled by intelligence of a different kind,—Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, taken prisoner while fighting with

the king, had remained up to this time in close confinement at Pavia. Being informed that amongst the terms of negotiation his own territory of Navarre was eagerly stipulated for by the emperor, he formed a plan of escape, which none but a bold spirit would have ventured upon; and by his own promptness and daring, aided by the faithfulness of his attendants, he succeeded, at the peril of his life; and, returning to France, presented himself before the regent and her daughter, whose friendship he had shared in early youth.

The gallant youth had only reached the age of twenty-two. Long immured in almost hopeless captivity, an alien from camps and courts, he must have felt the change in his position, as ardent and buoyant youth alone can feel. Marguerite must also have been a beautiful vision rising on his fancy, arrayed in all the pleasant memories of their early intercourse. No wonder that Henry was soon translated from an exile to a lover; and, favoured by the regent, he was not sentenced to despair.

But Marguerite appears to have been still too much absorbed in anxieties respecting her brother, to lend a willing ear to the suit of one who, however, possessed every qualification of person and mind calculated to win her favour. Henry was not only brave and chivalrous, but learned and eloquent, and he was tolerant towards the religious views which she had embraced. In happier times, when Francis was restored to his country, and when Marguerite was sojourning in the South of France, in the society of this beloved brother, and the king of Navarre; especially

when she had an opportunity of observing how much he was beloved by his own people, she listened more favourably to her young lover. But many adverse circumstances for some time prevented their union. Again the exercise of that kingly prerogative, of bargaining away the happiness, sometimes of those most devoted to their own, interfered; and Marguerite herself was subjected to the humiliation of being again proposed as the consort of Henry VIII. of England, for no better reason than that of strengthening an alliance likely to be prejudicial to the Spanish monarch.

The liberation of the French king from his captivity was the momentous event which now filled the minds of his nearest and most devoted relatives, to the exclusion of almost every other. The meeting of those who had been so painfully separated was to take place at Bayonne, to which place Madame, the Duchess d'Alençon, and the whole court repaired, taking with them the two oldest sons of the king, who were to be exchanged as hostages, to insure the fulfilment of his part of the treaty by which his liberation was granted. Eleanor, the sister of Charles, who constituted but another article in the stipulations, was already affianced to the French king; and it was perhaps well for the young princes, in their foreign captivity, that circumstances transpired, in consequence of which this lady remained near them to watch over their welfare.

The characteristic and buoyant exultation of Francis, when on this occasion he crossed the river which formed the boundary line of his freedom, and, springing upon a fleet charger, waved his cap in the air, exclaiming, "Once more a king!" must have filled the

heart of every beholder with an enthusiasm scarcely less than his own. Perhaps the thrilling excitement of this moment, and the joy of receiving back their sovereign unharmed, disposed them more to pardon the first act of his restoration, after, however, the offering of public thanks to God for his deliverance. This act was to refuse to ratify the treaty by which he had obtained his liberation; upon which the astonished viceroy of the emperor returned to his master, to meet the storm which he had no power to avert.

Amidst the general rejoicing which filled Bayonne and the neighbourhood with festivity, there is one feature of Louisa's character, as displayed on this occasion, peculiarly deserving of notice. During the absence of her son, she had sustained the burden of empire under peculiar disadvantages to herself; she had had to assert her authority where it was least welcome, and to enforce compliance with measures which were most unpopular with the Parliament and the country at large. She had to draw upon the people to repair the vast losses occasioned by harassing and unsuccessful wars; and in carrying out these purposes, she had deemed it necessary to employ the services of a man whose severe and grasping character reflected odium upon herself. All this she had borne; and through all she had reserved, for the greater happiness and glory of her son, that highest and purest of the pleasures which belong to power, the rewarding of services received in the hour of need. No sooner was her son restored to her and to his country, than she was the first, beginning even at Bayonne, to forward the bestowment of tokens of his gratitude and favour

upon those who had suffered in his cause. In return for this noble and delicate consideration, Francis lost no time in making public and honourable acknowledgment of the signal services rendered him by his mother, upon whom, as well as upon his sister, he bestowed fresh dignities and increased possessions.

As already implied, it soon became the policy of Francis to court the alliance of the king of England; and while negotiations with that monarch were pending, the hand of Marguerite was not her own to give, even where she had bestowed her affections. Finding, however, that even if these negotiations should proceed favourably in other respects, Henry had already selected as his future consort a lady who had once filled the position of maid-of-honour to the Duchess d'Alençon, the pride of Francis revolted from the indignity of such association with his sister's name, and he finally consented to her marriage with the king of Navarre, an event which was celebrated in January 1527.

If in the course of these notices of the character of Louisa of Savoy, there should appear to have been too frequent mention of her daughter, it may perhaps be pardoned, in the first place, on the ground of the mother's influence being most clearly understood through the conduct of her children; and in the second, because Marguerite herself became the mother of one who was not only remarkable in her own character, but also illustrious as the mother of a great man, and a king. On this account the marriage of the Duchess d'Alençon with the king of Navarre, and her frequent residence with him in his province of Béarn, becomes

a matter of importance connected with the Protestant views, the high principles, and the strong energies of her justly celebrated daughter, Jeanne d'Albret.

On returning to the character of Louisa, we have again to pursue it through one of those dark passages by which its career was so often shadowed. With all her love for her son, and her devotion to his honour and glory, the mother does not appear so generous in money as in affection. When, after many violations of treaty, after mutual recriminations, and even after defiance to personal and mortal combat, the two sovereigns of France and Spain had so far agreed, that the young princes were to be liberated on the payment of a large sum of money which exhausted the resources of the nation, we do not find that the mother came forward to assist, as might have been expected, but rather hoarded the wealth she had amassed, it is just possible, with a view to supplying the future exigencies of her son. At all events her wealth was considerable, and the most disgraceful fact connected with this strange anomaly of character was, that Louisa had been willing, almost eager, to grasp as her own the forfeited possessions of the lost Bourbon, all now finally confiscated. The regent had wisely withheld her hand from interference in these matters during the absence of the king; but immediately on his return, proceedings were commenced by which the name of Charles de Bourbon was erased from the rank which his family had long enjoyed, and the whole of his vast estates forfeited.

In the disputes between the king of France and the emperor, the whole of the European powers were

beginning to feel their own interests so deeply implicated, that a general desire was awakened to bring about, by some means or other, more amicable relations between these two close, but discordant neighbours. Both were suffering severely from their long continued and destructive animosity. Indeed, it was evident that such a state of things could not exist much longer. Something must be done. An amicable meeting for the adjustment of these differences was the only practicable resource. But who *could* meet? Certainly not the sovereigns themselves: that was impossible. The question, however, was not so much who would be willing to meet for this purpose, as who was competent, and, above all, who could be trusted with the transaction of affairs at once so delicate, so complicated, and so momentous. Strange to say, two women were selected as the only individuals suitable for this great occasion, and equal to its demands. The mother of the king of France appears to have first offered herself to undertake the necessary negotiations; and on the other side the emperor proposed his aunt, the Archduchess Marguerite of Austria.

Cambray was fixed upon for the place of meeting, and it may readily be supposed with what pomp and majesty the two ladies would advance towards the rendezvous, each attended by her court, comprising all that was noble, splendid, and imposing, in the separate realms, for whose welfare and honour they had the proud dignity of negotiating. The chariots, the horsemen, the velvet-covered litters, the prancing palfreys, the rich housings, and all the costly and brilliant appendages to this magnificent array, we can do no more

than suggest to the imagination, referring the reader for these particulars again to the work to which we are so deeply indebted. It is more to our immediate purpose to state, that through immense and almost inextricable difficulties, Louisa conducted herself with a steady perseverance, which nothing could divert from what she considered to be the true interests of her son; so that the greatest impediments to conciliation were finally removed by the levy of an enormous fine upon France; and thus in the end, by the wary and judicious management of these two ladies, those terms of agreement were settled, which insured the interests of Europe by the memorable peace of Cambray.

But the health of Louisa was beginning at this time very seriously to decline. Her constitution was increasingly liable to those attacks of violent and almost excruciating pain, which would have subdued the energies of any woman of ordinary mould and temperament. She was yet scarcely to be called old, and in all affairs of moment was able to conduct herself with unabated vigour, notwithstanding the encroachments of her painful malady. On the occasion of the meeting of the young princes, when at last restored to their country, the mother of Francis filled a conspicuous and honoured place, as well as in all that array of pomp and festivity, through which the queen, now permitted to take her dignified position as consort to the king of France, was dragged from place to place, a public spectacle of royal majesty, adorned with costly gems, and radiant in all which could attract the gaze of wondering admiration; yet secretly detested as a wife, because of the degrading terms by which her hand had been purchased,

and all the hated memories with which it was associated.

In all these Madame filled an important and conspicuous place. The great business of her active life, however, was drawing near its close; and up to this time she had been so strikingly averse to any thought or mention of death, that even on occasions of her attendance upon public worship, if a sermon was preached, the subject of the termination of life had to be so modified as to render it as little offensive as possible.

The year 1531 was to France a period of general distress and gloom. The nation, impoverished by the costly ransom of the royal family, was but ill prepared for the visitation of a severe and contagious epidemic, preceded by a season of famine, the result of an unusual state of the atmosphere; and all deepened in their appalling influence upon the minds of the people, by an extraordinary celestial phenomenon. It was a time of terror and mourning. Such was the fearful extent of the pestilence, and such the apprehensions respecting its infectious nature, that not only were the royal children guarded with the utmost solicitude, but friends were separated without venturing upon any mode of communication from places where the disease was most prevalent. Under this restriction, Marguerite, while attending upon the sick-bed of her mother, was debarred the privilege of any kind of intercourse with her brother. In the midst of this general gloom, however, hope did not entirely forsake her. Louisa had rallied so often after her paroxysms of suffering; her energies were so strong and buoyant; her spirit so indomitable,

that it must have been difficult to realize the fact, even when death was actually at hand.

In the summer of this memorable year, the health of the sufferer did indeed revive. She had been removed to Fontainebleau, and derived benefit from her favourite air. The king and queen attended upon her there; but considering her so much better as to afford hope of recovery, they left her under the promise that when sufficiently restored she would follow them to Blois. The young princes next paid their visit of affection, and Marguerite, in her letter to Francis, speaks of them as "three little doctors," her mother having enjoyed their society with renewed and lively interest. At intervals, however, the disease under which Louisa laboured returned with increased violence, and her strength became so much reduced, that for some time it seemed impossible to make the necessary effort for joining her son. These alterations continued for many weeks, but in the month of September the attempt was made.

The last hope of the mother, that of once more beholding her idolized son, was never to be realized. She had journeyed only part of the way, when, under a severe recurrence of her malady, she was so struck with the unexpected appearance of a brilliant comet which lighted her chamber at the dead of night, that, construing this ill-understood phenomenon into an omen of death, and sinking rapidly from that hour, she expired before it was possible that any messenger could reach her son.

Much that is highly characteristic of this remarkable woman took place as she approached the confines of

the grave. For some time no one dared to reveal to her the true state of her case. One of the physicians in attendance had expressed an opinion favourable to her recovery; and to this she had clung until past all hope. But her own impressions on beholding the light of the comet did more to convince her than could have been done by all the opinions of the most learned men. A great life to be surrendered, demanded, as she considered, some great token of the fact; and this she could believe.

Notwithstanding her disgust at the mention of death, and her distress of mind, which had sometimes been greater than her bodily pain, it does not appear that this premonition of the comet, with the conviction it impressed upon the sufferer's mind, was attended with any proportionate degree of terror or distress. Louisa's great agony was that of dying without once more embracing her son. For this she cried and wept aloud, until on being convinced how impossible it was for him to come to her then, she consoled herself by observing that neither mother nor son could have endured the anguish of parting, so it was better for both as it was.

Louisa appears to have conducted herself with the greatest propriety during the religious rites which were duly performed, and if her rapturous exclamations upon what Jesus had done in dying for her sins, can be accepted as sufficient for the last hours of an unscrupulous life like hers, there was hope in her end. With the same ardour, and with similar expressions, she afterwards kissed the crucifix presented to her lips, but the motherly trait which immediately followed

remains impressed upon the memory as infinitely more touching, and perhaps more sincere.

It is stated in the life of Marguerite, that "Madame then drew her daughter fondly towards her; the sight of Marguerite's tears seemed to move her greatly. At length she said, 'Marguerite, when I look upon you, my heart seems only to throb with the tender love I bear you, when it ought to be occupied by God alone. One word only, *m'amye*,—know, and let it give you comfort, that by the gift of God my heart clings now in faith to Him, and that He gives me inward assurance of eternal salvation.'"

How perfectly in harmony with the whole of Louisa's past life, and with the all-absorbing love of her passionate heart, was this inability to think exclusively of God, while the form of one of her idolized children stood so near her. So had it always been with her—something human between her and God—some love, and not unfrequently some hate, filling the very depths of her soul, to the exclusion of every other feeling.

We cannot do better than go on with the closing moments of Louisa's life, as described by the same writer. After being requested to retire, "Marguerite then hurriedly rose, and after pressing the trembling hand that clasped her own to her lips, she retreated to a distant part of the room, and placed herself where she could watch her mother without being seen by her. After Marguerite quitted her side, the thoughts of Louisa seemed to be concentrated alone on the change which awaited her. Her confessor stood by the bed and continued his exhortations. For some

time Madame listened with signs of great outward humility, but at length, her strength being exhausted, she sank into a stupor, and seemed scarcely conscious of the movements of the persons around her bed. She was thoughtlessly roused again to temporary consciousness by the importunities of an old and favoured servant, who approached the bed, and besought his dying mistress to bestow a word of comfort and farewell on her disconsolate servant. Madame opened her eyes, and fixed them steadily on the suppliant; she then turned away her head, murmuring, 'Cease to trouble me; my thoughts henceforth are above.' Fearing that the intruder was about to renew his solicitations, Marguerite requested him to leave her mother in peace, through her passage to that world where children and servants would be as nothing in comparison with those glories, the immediate presence of which already filled her soul.'' At these words it is further stated, that 'a smile passed over the features of the dying mother, as she feebly articulated, '*Il est ainsi, m'amye.*' These are the last recorded words spoken by Louisa, and early in the morning of the 22nd of September, 1531, she expired so calmly, that Marguerite, who was watching beside her, knew not the precise moment of her mother's death.'

In tracing these few faint features of a remarkable character, we are not unacquainted with the fact, that history has associated the name of Louisa of Savoy with vices so gross and so numerous, that the reader, if a scrupulous and right-principled mother, may not unreasonably exclaim, "Why hold up before us the example of such a woman?" Will such a mother per-

mit the writer to ask in return,—"Have you sons of your own? Are they prepared and fitted, by every qualification which it has been in your power to encourage or bestow, for the highest position which in the ordinary course of human affairs it is possible for them to attain; and, having attained it, will they select you above all the wise and powerful men of their acquaintance, not only to share an equal amount of honour, but to be their chosen counsellor in every difficulty, alike their help in weakness, and their pride in power?" If not, then there may surely be something yet to learn even from the character of Louisa of Savoy.

VII.

THE MOTHER OF HENRY IV.

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME, the distinguished mother of Jeanne d'Albret, has already filled no inconsiderable place in these notices; her peculiar position, as a link of relationship between two remarkable women, rendering it impossible to overlook her own individual eminence, and the influence which her virtues and attainments exercised over all those with whom she was intimately associated. If, from these three generations of illustrious women, following in direct succession from Louisa of Savoy to her grand-daughter Jeanne d'Albret, we should attempt to argue in favour of the transmission of hereditary greatness of character, we should yet find ourselves at a loss to account for the vast difference in natural qualities by which these equally extraordinary women were clearly distinguished one from the other. Had their individual features of character been similar, this instance would have stood almost unrivalled in history, as an illustration of hereditary transmission; but it so happens, that, except in those tendencies of habit and taste which may in great measure be referred to educational influences,

there seems to have been scarcely likeness enough to mark them out as belonging to one family; and especially in their moral qualities, few women of the same rank and circumstances could well have been more different, allowing only for a more than ordinary share of beauty in each.

Throughout the whole of Marguerite's life, we find her influenced in thought and action by an almost idolatrous devotion to her brother, Francis the First. Her letters to him abound in expressions bordering on adulation, while her whole conduct evinced a submission to his will, at times almost servile in its subserviency; and, but that it is redeemed by the evident sincerity of the sister's love and admiration, it would seem as if the dignified and graceful Marguerite had, in this instance, occasionally allowed her regard for truth to give place to her desire of pleasing. It is evident, indeed, that in her opinion the king could *do no wrong*. That no personal consideration relating to herself could for a moment stand in the way of his interests, was most heroically proved by her journey to Spain, and her sufferings in that country during the time of her brother's imprisonment. Through the whole course of their long and undeviating attachment, his slightest wish was her law, his frown her heaviest calamity, his presence the joy and support of her life, while his absence, though temporary, was felt as a loss for which nothing could compensate. Impossible as this would seem in some women, towards a man whose character in all substantial virtues was far inferior to her own, it was sincere in Marguerite, by whom her brother was scarcely less revered than beloved; and

who, in return for this blind but devoted idolatry, loved his sister, it is true, and admired her above all other women, but yet, on every occasion when it might serve his own interests, was ready to barter this inestimable treasure with the highest bidder in the political market.

Indeed, the conduct of Francis towards his female relatives is by no means the most agreeable part of his character; and the wonder is, not so much that they loved him extravagantly, as that they continued to love him at all. And yet, with a truly feminine infatuation, they seem all to have loved him beyond the common measure of human affection. Mother, sister, and sister's child, were all enchained by the same fascination. As usually happens with women thus circumstanced, Marguerite helped effectually to spoil the character of Francis, as a man, by her idolatrous subserviency, which, from a woman so highly gifted and so incomparably superior, must have been irresistibly flattering; while, as a king, the surrounding circumstances of rank and power supplied an unusual amount of influences, all tending in the same direction. Thus it was not only the sovereign who must always be obeyed, but the brother, the gentleman, the bosom friend, the lord, who must be conciliated; and it would in all probability have been a deeper offence to Francis, to have thwarted his wishes as a member of his family and household, than to have rebelled against his authority as a sovereign. This will account for much that has to be described in the life and character of Jeanne d'Albret, as bearing directly upon her happiness in some of its nearest relationships, and as

presenting a somewhat curious contrast between the voluntary submission of their passive but united household, and the indomitable spirit of a young girl, who was the first to dare to oppose the wishes of the king.

In the notice of Louisa of Savoy, we left her beautiful and accomplished daughter Marguerite, recently married to Henry II., king of Navarre, still detained alike by affection and duty at the court of her brother, though sometimes allowed to pay a brief visit, with her husband, to his comparatively small territory in the South of France, his kingdom of Navarre on the Spanish side having been absorbed, first by usurpation, and then by treaty, into the empire of Charles V.

It is not possible to contemplate the position of the king of Navarre, Marguerite's young husband, without perceiving that it must have been anything but flattering to a man of spirit; while the treatment he received from the hands of his royal brother-in-law, was far from being such as might reasonably have been expected from one who, after bravely fighting by the side of Francis at the battle of Pavia, had shared his captivity, and then, after effecting his own escape, had done everything in his power to serve the interests of the French king, even endangering his popularity amongst his own people, by the strenuous efforts he made in raising subsidies for the ransom of the two princes.

Chiefly, however, as a husband and a friend, Henry was made to feel how far he must stand apart from any competition with Francis, in influencing Marguerite's conduct,—nay, almost in commanding her affectionate regard. There was nothing in the con-

duct of the queen of Navarre to justify the idea that she did not love her husband as well as she could love any man beyond her brother. But even after Francis had granted a long delayed and reluctant consent to his sister's marriage, he still asserted a dominion over her actions, her affections, and her personal affairs, which occasionally separated her almost entirely from the society of her husband, and was liable at all times to interfere with his domestic comforts and pursuits. No wonder that a certain amount of secret jealousy sprung up in the mind of the king of Navarre towards a brother who could enforce such selfish and arbitrary demands. First to be deprived of a considerable amount of his territory as a king, without any disposition on the part of Francis to assist him in regaining it, and then, with still greater injustice, to be deprived of that first place in the confidence and regard of his wife which belongs to the dignity as well as the affection of a husband,—these were surely grievances enough to alienate the most devoted allegiance, if not also to convert a once faithful ally into a formidable enemy.

The fear lest Henry should be won over to the interests of his near and powerful neighbour Charles V. was the cause of constant uneasiness to Francis, who, however, adopted no generous or honourable means for securing the attachment of the king of Navarre as a friend and a brother. Francis, indeed, with all his high capabilities and splendid attainments, seems to have cared very little either for the feelings or the interests of others, even of those whom he loved most tenderly. According to the mood of the moment, he

could be fond and caressing, he could flatter and even soothe; and by these and other arts of pleasing, added to his great personal attractions, he could not only win but retain the affections of women to an extraordinary extent. He took care, however, to pledge himself to little in return. He was in reality more constant in his own attachments than would seem consistent with such a character, but they cost him no more than a little tenderness, easily bestowed and always gratefully received. Lightly and readily as he won for himself all he desired by the exercise of his many graceful and attractive endowments, the happiness of others was cast aside the first moment that he found it interrupting his progress, or likely to frustrate the purpose which possessed his mind. This purpose was revenge as often as ambition. It is true that Francis had an unusual share of treachery, and wrong, and personal indignity to remember; and in reading the history of those long enduring animosities between him and Charles, it would be impossible to resist an involuntary leaning to the side of the French king, did not his character unfold itself as so entirely wanting in all solid foundation of principle, that the vexatious disappointment attendant upon almost every change sends us back to the severe and heartless Charles as to something more firm and sure, because entirely without those attractive qualities for which his rival was so universally admired.

By these remarks we are only desirous of showing what was the position of Marguerite at her brother's court, of which she was the greatest ornament, and where her presence seemed still to be necessary to her

brother's contentment. On her part also every act and every thought remained as much under the dominion of Francis, as before her marriage. Thus even the birth of her child took place at his palace at Fontainebleau, where her daughter Jeanne first saw the light in January 1528.

Many noble ladies, amongst whom was Madame the king's mother, were present on this occasion, and great was the rejoicing throughout the country, especially in the district of Béarn, remarkable for its enthusiastic loyalty to the house of Albret, of which this child was regarded as the future representative, and, in case of there being no sons, heir to the throne of Navarre.

Passing over the splendid baptism, and all the dignities and festivities of which the unconscious babe was the object, we turn with somewhat deeper interest to the moral bearings of this important event, quickly followed as it was by an almost premature development of beauty, brightness, and energy on the part of the child, in whose after-career we discover for what that astonishing energy was preparing. Perhaps in this quality alone did Louisa of Savoy, her children and grandchild,—nay, we might add, her great-grandchild, Henry IV., entirely resemble each other. Under all circumstances it was their indomitable energy by which they were sustained, and which never failed them; while the feats they achieved, both in acquiring, devising, and acting, were such as might have filled the whole life experience of ten times their number of ordinary individuals.

For the history of the early life of Jeanne d'Albret

we are again indebted to her mother's biographer,* who tells us, that the vivacity of this remarkable child was such as to astonish and delight all who took part in the joyous gambols of her early years. Marguerite, however, had the good sense to know that a court was not the place for a healthy and prosperous childhood. She therefore placed the young princess under suitable care in a country residence, near to her own abode at the castle of Alençon, where she could see her often, and superintend every arrangement for her welfare. After the age of five, the little princess was permitted to visit her royal uncle at the court of St. Germain, where she returned his flattering caresses and fond indulgence with that enthusiastic affection, which Francis seldom failed to inspire in the recipients of his kindness. In consequence of the favour which the child received at court, it soon became an object of ambition with the heads of other noble families, to have their daughters associated with the little princess of Navarre; and thus, in her own person, Jeanne became an object of homage and attention almost beyond that which the daughters of Francis themselves enjoyed.

A residence at the French court having now become for many reasons irksome to the king of Navarre, he determined to retire with his wife, on the death of her mother, to their distant dominions in the south, taking up their abode in the palace at Pau, subsequently so well known as the birthplace of Henry IV. Marguerite, on this occasion, seems to have preferred accompanying her husband, though not able to obtain

* Miss Freer.

the consent of Francis to her departure without considerable difficulty. But when it came to the question of parting with the child, the king was inexorable. Nothing could induce him to relinquish, out of his own hands, the custody of one who might prove a bribe of inestimable value in securing some powerful ally, thus forwarding the first and always dominant purpose of his heart,—the thwarting or humbling of his imperial enemy. What feelings were these to be interwoven with those tender caresses which Francis lavished upon the child of his beloved sister; while she, happily unconscious, received them as tokens of genuine affection, proud that they emanated from so distinguished a source!

Much to the chagrin of Henry d'Albret, his consort, unable to deny anything to her brother, consented to leave her child, only stipulating that her residence should be separate from the court. The castle of Plessis-les-Tours was therefore selected by Francis as her future home; and here her household was appointed, with a grave matron, Madame de Silly, for her governess and care-taker, and Nicolas de Bourbon, a poet, for her tutor. In all those accomplishments for which her mother was remarkable, the princess was carefully instructed; but though gifted with talents of the highest order, and subsequently devoted to literary pursuits of a grave and learned character, that peculiar branch in which it might be supposed that the poet would most excel, seems never to have found the same amount of favour with Jeanne as with her mother. Indeed, her talents, though brilliant, were of a different order; and while, throughout her life, a noble patroness of men

of letters, her mind appears never to have received so much of that poetic impress as might have been expected from surrounding circumstances, as well as from her close relationship to the elegant and imaginative Marguerite.

The only redeeming point in the unnatural and arbitrary requirements of Francis, when detaining his niece from the society of her parents, was a promise granted to the king of Navarre, that the princess should be affianced to his second son, Henry, Duke of Orleans. With this Henry of Navarre was compelled to be satisfied. Indeed the proposal was far too advantageous to be disregarded by either of the parents of Jeanne; though, on the other side, it presented no impediment to the subsequent marriage of his son with an Italian princess, the celebrated Catherine de Medici.

It might be interesting, as well as curious, did space permit, to trace more minutely than is here possible the simultaneous career of these two women, both having been appointed to the same post of honour, as the consort of a future king, yet setting out upon the journey of life with *moral* tendencies as different as it could perhaps be possible to find in the whole range of human conduct and experience. Nor is it the least curious scene in this strange and eventful period of history, that these two women in their relationship and interests should have been drawn so closely and so frequently together; while in character and disposition, as in principles and motives, they remained separated as widely as good from evil. From the character of Jeanne,—open, frank, and truthful even in childhood, and under all circumstances of life adhering to

the *real* with a tenacity which nothing could shake, we see clearly that in proportion as she was thus enabled to fulfil the high destiny to which she was called, as the friend and protector of the Protestant cause, she was disqualified for coping with those insinuating wiles which Catherine brought with her from her native land, and which, growing with her years, and maturing in the atmosphere of pomp and power, rendered her at once a terror and a charm—a serpent in her subtlety, no less than in the venom of her hate, and sometimes even in the treachery of her embrace.

A few words may not be inappropriate here on the character of Catherine de Medici as a mother. It seems to me that there was one strong point of difference between her system of influence and that of Louisa of Savoy, which tends to throw light upon the subject of maternal influence in general. Louisa's constant study was to make her son a great man, *irrespective of herself.* She loved him with an absorbing affection, and next to him she loved power: it is not to be denied that she also loved herself; but beyond and above all other considerations, the strong purpose of her heart was directed to the honour, the welfare, and the glory of her son. When Francis was raised to the throne, she determined that he should be "every inch a king." This was more to her than all other earthly considerations,—perhaps, than all heavenly; and whatever Louisa might be as a woman, in this strong purpose she never failed.

Catherine, on the other hand, appears never to have felt the supremacy of such a purpose. Her sons were to be no more than instruments to be used at her plea-

sure, the mere channels or mediums of her own power. She might love them, as, in one instance especially, she is said to have done, with a kind of partial fondness; but her whole system, in connection with the exercise of sovereign power, was eminently calculated to make either fools or madmen of those who, without free-will in the use of such power, had to bear its responsibility; and, under her unscrupulous administration, they had to endure its odium too.

Without entering further into the hateful and hated character of Catherine de Medici, for whose real and supposed enormities there may perhaps be more excuse than many are willing to believe, who do not care to trace the actions of mankind back to the associations and impressions of early life, there seems enough to dwell upon in this one phase of her system with regard to her children, to furnish matter for serious thought in the minds of all who have to do with the early training of sons. Indeed, whether the experiment be made in exalted or humble life, the fact is the same—that a man must be a man, not a mere instrument for working out his mother's purposes, however noble or praiseworthy such purposes in themselves may be. According to the same principle, the great business of education, and that alone by which it can be of any deep or lasting benefit, is to make those who are educated what they are expected in after-life to *be;* not, as is too generally imagined, to qualify them only for what they are to *do.* Unquestionably this is something; it is much where such qualification is efficient and expansive. But, after all, there is the being—the character—the actual man or woman, which must stand

individually before the world, when all immediate influences of government or relationship are withdrawn; and just in proportion as such individuality is sustained within itself by the elements of noble, vigorous, and active existence, so far may it be said to have been educated aright,—so far is it fitted for being, as well as doing, and that according to the highest standard of excellence in character as well as in conduct.

But we return to the childhood of Jeanne d'Albret at her remote residence, where, though allowed a certain number of companions of her own age, the princess was sometimes disposed to rebel against the restrictions which kept her from a gayer and more varied mode of life. Over these companions there is reason to fear that Jeanne occasionally exercised a degree of authority more befitting her rank than her years; and especially was her unscrupulous contempt called forth by any want of firmness, truthfulness, or strength of character in her associates. The most perfect pattern of female excellence, in the opinion of the young princess, was her mother. In her example her aspiring mind found entire satisfaction; while the gentle but consistent firmness of Marguerite exercised over her daughter a degree of influence seldom found practicable under the mere assertion of power. Even towards her uncle, the splendid and royal Francis, before whom Marguerite, so tenderly beloved, used scarcely the liberty of free action or speech, little Jeanne was accustomed to behave with the utmost familiarity, expressing her thoughts and wishes in his presence with a license which afforded infinite amusement to the courtiers, and sometimes to the sensitive mother no little alarm.

As a pleasant variety in her daughter's monotonous life, the queen of Navarre sometimes paid a short visit to Plessis, leaving her child only the more melancholy each time, from the natural craving of her heart to be more frequently with her mother. Nor did the residence to which she was condemned offer much attraction to a young and lively girl. One of the historians of Béarn has said of her, speaking of this sorrowful time, "that the lustre of her complexion was marred by the abundance of her tears." But there were events already dawning in the horizon, which might have suggested something of romantic interest to a young girl thus situated, had Jeanne possessed more of the poetical and less of the practical tendency in her character. Of course there were plans of marriage for the child, and some very threatening ones, before she had escaped from the care of her nurses. One has been already mentioned, but that was speedily set aside, with as little scruple on the part of Francis as he showed in retaining possession of his niece. Another, continually talked of, was an alliance with Philip of Spain; it was one which the emperor appeared cordially to approve. The king of Navarre, suffering severely under the treatment of Francis, and greatly chagrined at the violation of his promise respecting the Duke of Orleans, became secretly disposed to favour this plan, partly from the hope that under such an union his kingdom of Navarre would at last be restored to its rightful sovereign. At all events, whatever the real wishes of Henry might be, there existed a perpetual jealousy in the mind of Francis, lest his brother-in-law should be tempted over to the interests

of Charles. Thus, in order to place beyond the reach of both any advantage which might be derived from the marriage of his niece, he determined to find a husband for her elsewhere, and of course to compel the child to marry whomsoever he might condescend to choose. Of his power to do this he probably entertained not the shadow of a doubt; and indeed the case admitted of none, women, and illustrious women too, being then disposed of like property or chattels of any other kind.

So, casting an inquiring eye over the surrounding nations, Francis looked earnestly, not for the man who might best please his niece, or even himself, but for one, an alliance with whom would be most likely to vex his imperial neighbour. It happened about this time that the king of France received a visit from a certain Duke of Cleves, brother to one of the many unfortunate wives of Henry VIII. of England. The duke was not unsuitable in age, and he had a great grievance against the emperor, who, according to his accustomed tactics, had so managed as to absorb the territories of the duke into his own empire. The Duke of Cleves had consequently not only thrown off his allegiance to Charles, but had commenced hostilities against him, which it would be impossible for so inferior a power, unaided, to sustain. Francis was ready to promise all needful succour in such a cause; and in addition to men and money, he promised also the hand of his niece, thinking that by this means he should add weight to the blow, which, by this clever stratagem, he was about to have the pleasure of inflicting upon his rival.

It may be supposed how indignantly the king of Navarre would receive the tidings of this insolent disposal of his daughter, respecting whom it was more than probable he was then carrying on negotiations in a different quarter, and of a nature much more honourable to himself and his family. The mother, however, appears not to have shared in these indignant feelings, but rather to have leaned to her brother's wishes, upon the principle, no doubt, that the king could do no wrong. But the poor child!—the high-spirited, impetuous, dauntless Jeanne, who had been sent for by her uncle, as she supposed, only to receive his caresses,—when suddenly, in the midst of his endearments, she was told that a marriage was in contemplation, by which she would necessarily be separated from her mother, and from all whom she had ever loved! No wonder that the child burst into a passion of tears, and when she had wept away the first violence of her emotion, most piteously implored her uncle that he would spare her this misery.

Francis, however, in a purpose of this kind, was little likely to be moved by the entreaties of a child. His will was law. Jeanne must meet her mother at Alençon, and all necessary preparations must be commenced forthwith. First, however, she must be presented to her bridegroom, before whom, even in the presence of the king, she conducted herself with all the haughtiness which belonged to the proud blood of her race. The duke was no unworthy suitor in person and address; but nothing he could say or do was able to elicit more than a smile of scorn from his little mistress. Even when remonstrated with for her con-

duct, Jeanne expressed the greatest contempt for the alliance, as a degradation to a princess of Béarn. Such indeed was the steadiness of her opposition, that even Francis seemed puzzled what to do, and could only send messages to his sister expressing his hope that she would bring her daughter to a better sense of duty.

Marguerite was overwhelmed with shame and vexation at the contumacious behaviour of her child, and would fain have thrown the blame of her conduct upon some ill-adviser. But Jeanne needed no adviser where her sense of right and justice was concerned. She could think and act for herself; and even then, when scarcely more than eleven years of age,—seeing that preparations for this odious marriage were going on, and considering, perhaps, how she stood alone in her opposition to those who were all-powerful over her actions, and even her life,—she did the only thing which remained possible to her, and which in the end proved to be the wisest thing she could have done. With a firmness and capability far beyond her years, Jeanne drew up, in well-selected words, a determined protest against the marriage, stating that it was entirely against her wish and will, and that she neither could nor would become the wife of the Duke of Cleves, unless by compulsion. In this remarkable document she states clearly the threats which were held out to her in case of resistance, curiously enough inserting the fact that her mother had selected the punishment of *whipping* as most likely to produce the desired result. The princess, therefore, gravely pronounces such marriage as null and void; and with a solemn appeal to God, as her only protector, she concludes by signing

her name, to which are appended those of three members of her household as witnesses. The document was then carefully secreted, in order to be produced, if required, at some future time of need.

Notwithstanding these precautions, the preparations for the marriage went on, and the preliminary ceremony of betrothment took place at the castle of Alençon. Not satisfied with this, Francis persisted in the further ceremony of marriage, for which purpose Jeanne was removed to Chatellerault. But before her departure, she drew up another protest, confirming the first, as written by her own hand; and again, in language equally decided and forcible, she declared the marriage to be under compulsion, and entirely against her will. The second document was signed by witnesses, like the first, and in this spirit the little bride was taken to the place of meeting, where the Duke of Cleves awaited her arrival, and where he again found himself unable to win the slightest mark of favour from the indignant princess.

The marriage ceremony persisted in under such circumstances must have been a strange affair. It took place in July, 1540. Everything was arranged with the utmost regard to pomp and splendour. The most lavish expenditure was not thought too much for the occasion. The bride herself, who was absolutely weighed down by the quantity of gems, and ermine, and the sweeping train with which her person was encumbered, when the time arrived for her to proceed to the altar, very naturally protested that she was unable to walk. There might be other reasons besides the weight of her jewels why Jeanne found the act of

proceeding so difficult. However, even this difficulty was not permitted to remain insurmountable. If the bride could not walk, she must be carried. Francis was not going to be baffled in that way; so making a sign to the dignified Montmorency, Jeanne was taken up in his arms and carried to the chapel, where the ceremony passed off without further interruption.

The most agreeable part of these transactions, to the young bride, must have been the formal act of the duke in consigning her, immediately after the marriage ceremony, to the undisputed charge of her mother, with whom she was to remain until old enough to take her position as a wife. This arrangement probably gave her spirits to look out upon the wonderful display of jousts and other entertainments, by which the occasion was celebrated through the following week, during which it is said that the princess resisted, with unabated disgust, even the most respectful attentions of the bridegroom.

When these festivities were concluded, the Duke of Cleves departed for the wars, which he hoped to be able to prosecute more successfully in consequence of the assistance which Francis had promised; while the bride, now for the first time permitted the full enjoyment of her mother's society, gladly accompanied her to their distant territory of Béarn. Here her young and susceptible mind became subject to impressions and influences of a widely different nature from those by which she had hitherto been surrounded; and here, in all probability, she first received that strong bias towards religious truth, which subsequently rendered Jeanne d'Albret one of the most admirable,

as well as one of the most distinguished of women. It was not suddenly, however, that these impressions were received;—for some time Jeanne adhered to the Romish Church, though favourably inclined towards her mother's opinions, simply from admiring so profoundly that character upon which she knew that the principles and views of the reformers had been brought to operate. Jeanne's extremely gay and lively disposition also operated powerfully in an opposite direction to the gravity and the self-denial of those earnest men, who knew that if they would be faithful to that which they believed to be the cause of God, they must be prepared to lay down property, and peace, and even life itself. Such was not the natural temperament of Jeanne. It was said of her in Béarn, that she loved a dance better than a sermon. And perhaps it was well for her, seeing what the future had in store, that she brought into the world with her this joyous and elastic spirit, which for a long time nothing could subdue.

As the residence of the queen of Navarre within her husband's ancestral territories became now more frequent, and as this district soon became a scene of peculiar interest, as connected with the spread of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin; as the same scenes, scarcely rivalled in their natural beauty by any portion of our globe, are justly celebrated as surrounding the birthplace of Henry IV., it may not be inappropriate to add a few words descriptive of the castle and neighbourhood of Pau, Marguerite's favourite place of abode, whenever she withdrew herself from her brother's court.

The castle or château of Pau, for it is an edifice to which either appellation may be applied, has been recently so far transformed by modern improvements, as scarcely to admit of any definite description in itself. For many years it was permitted to remain little better than a bare structure of massive walls, defended by towers, and covered with that lofty but narrow roofing, peculiar to buildings in some parts of the Continent, and especially in France. A few not very attractive apartments were shown to the visitor, interesting only from their associations; but the whole edifice was such as to present little beauty of any kind. It looked, in fact, as it has been described, extremely like having been a sort of house of rest and refreshment for noble sportsmen to repose in when fatigued with the chase. One of these, the famous Gaston de Foix, has left his name inscribed to mark his erection of a square tower of enormous magnitude at one side of the castle. From the summit of this tower, the eye of any one watching for a distant enemy, might sweep over an expanse of country almost illimitable in space, except that to the south it would be interrupted by the jagged and often snow-capped pinnacles of the whole range of the Pyrenees. And if that eye should take in beauty, as well as space, there would scarcely be wanting to its gratification any one element of grandeur or loveliness; from the broad sweeping river at the foot of the castle, the waving trees and the pleasure-grounds upon its banks, with more distant spots of verdure, rich in embowering foliage, here and there interrupting the flow of the clear waters; to the slightly swelling hills, first looking golden and green with vineyards,

then more steep and vast, and bristling with pines, until the crowning heights of the loftiest mountains sleep in the sunshine under a sky so clear and luminous, that every separate crag, and precipice, and valley, and ravine, stands distinctly revealed; down which, as the accustomed visitor knows, innumerable cascades and torrents are descending, sometimes dashing with their snow-white foam over beds of marble, sometimes bellowing in the darkness deep below, and sometimes creeping like silver threads over the far height, where only the wild chamois dares to tread.

It would seem impossible for one whose mind was constituted like that of Marguerite d'Angoulême, so sensitive to beauty, so imaginative and poetical, not to have lingered with peculiar interest amongst the scenery of Béarn; while, on the other hand, the gayer temperament of her husband and her daughter, the buoyant spirit, the dauntless courage, and the delight in freedom, perhaps constitutionally derived from their native air, as well as from association on the part of Henry with the habits of those hardy, independent mountaineers, must have imparted something of a romantic and inspiriting influence to the residence of this united family, within their royal but comparatively secluded abode.

It is needless to state here by what means the higher and perhaps still more beautiful portion of Navarre, lying to the south of the Pyrenees, had fallen into the hands of the Spanish sovereign. At the time of which I write, the kingdom over which Henry and Marguerite reigned, comprehended only the principality of Béarn, and the counties of Armanac, Albret,

Bigorre, and Comminges, with lawful title to the whole kingdom of Navarre. Their subjects, however, were an energetic, independent race, remarkable for their bravery, and for an enthusiastic loyalty to their sovereign which knew no bounds. Even to this day, the name of their beloved queen, Jeanne d'Albret, possesses for them a charm which time has never been able to efface; and to have given to France the bravest, the gayest, and best-hearted of her monarchs, is looked upon by them as a glory far beyond the actual possession of a crown. Well did this prince appreciate their native character, when he told them, that in ascending the throne, he should not "give Béarn to France, but France to Béarn."

Whatever may have been the condition of the royal castle and pleasure-grounds at Pau before this period, it is certain that the château became invested with a more splendid and even classic character under the refining influence of Marguerite, who, not satisfied with being herself the most remarkable woman of the age, both for learning and accomplishments, drew around her, wherever her residence might be, the most learned and distinguished men of that period. Nor was her consort inferior in his tastes, so that both were agreed in the delightful occupation of converting their originally rude palace into one of the most elegant, as regards its internal decorations, which France at that time could boast. Amongst the many artists and men of genius whom their taste and their liberality drew around them, they invited from Spain some Arabs renowned for their skill in architecture, from which circumstance it is probable the château has derived something of its Moorish aspect.

Notwithstanding their similarity of taste, it must, however, be granted that in all the higher and holier attributes of character, Marguerite was far superior to her husband. One circumstance in connection with their union was peculiarly unfortunate. The queen was older than her husband by at least ten years, so that while he had scarcely reached the prime of life, Marguerite had lived to know, to feel, and even to suffer, so much, that although her fading bloom was still beautiful as the golden sun-tints of declining day upon her vine-clad hills, she must have learned to feel, perhaps more forcibly than ever was the case with him, the transient and worthless nature of all mere earthly enjoyments. From this, and perhaps other concurring circumstances, Marguerite appears about this time not only to have withdrawn herself more frequently from her brother's court, but to have given her mind more earnestly than ever to the study of the tenets of the reformed religion. Many grave and learned professors, even ministers who preached these doctrines, were invited by the queen, and often found pleasant and congenial companionship beneath the royal roof. Thus, openly encouraged by their sovereign, the sentiments of the Reformers spread rapidly amongst the people; the king offering no direct opposition, nor any one perhaps apprehending at that time, to what the open profession of these sentiments would eventually lead.

Two years, perhaps the happiest of her life, were spent by the young princess of Béarn in the society of her mother, sometimes at Pau, and sometimes at their other royal castle of Nerac. There can be little

doubt but the experience of these years was fraught with beneficial influence as regards the character of Jeanne d'Albret. Although unprepared at this time to receive, with all their force and weight, the doctrines of the Reformers, her mind was deeply impressed by the characters of the self-denying men by whom these doctrines were maintained; and such was her own love for truth, under whatever form it might be presented to her, that she became at this time a constant reader of the Scriptures, under the direction of her mother, and of some of her mother's faithful advisers. Indeed, the society of the little court at Pau must have been highly instructive to the princess in many respects; and in the companionship of the many learned and holy men who resorted to that royal residence, some for the sake of the refined and congenial intercourse always to be met with there, and others for the countenance and protection which its noble liberality afforded, Jeanne received a lasting bias in favour of what was real and good, both in temporal and spiritual matters, which became strengthened and confirmed by the vicissitudes of her afterlife.

Jeanne, however, was still young, still remarkably impulsive, still subject to strong and deep impressions, sometimes suddenly imbibed; and there was one odious object which stood between her and the new doctrines, to which she would otherwise have listened with profound interest. The Duke of Cleves was known to be favourable to these views, if he had not openly embraced them; and how could Jeanne endure to share in feelings so deep and so vital with him? In this privileged abode there was but one cloud to

overshadow her existence, and that was already deepening and darkening from the quarter towards which she feared to look. This man had the power to claim her as his wife. The time allowed her was expiring, and the fate which awaited her in the distance must have obscured those bright southern skies, and cast a gloom over the lovely scenes which lay smiling around her.

The story of Jeanne's liberation may be briefly told. The Duke of Cleves, as might have been anticipated, was powerless to contend against so formidable an enemy as Charles; nor did Francis support him in the field, as he had promised. The indignation of the emperor threatened to annihilate the traitor vassal, who had dared, in his rebellion, to seek the alliance of France. Thoroughly convinced of his own helplessness in resisting the army which Charles was bringing into the field, the "poor craven bridegroom" succumbed to the mightier power, humbled himself at the feet of the emperor, was pardoned, and received back to his former allegiance, though on very humiliating conditions.

Francis, when too late, had collected a considerable force, which he was leading to the assistance of the duke. Already Jeanne had been conducted by the Cardinal Bellay, weeping and protesting, to the place of rendezvous. But just at the crisis of her arrival, the duke was on his knees before the imperious emperor, who demanded of him, amongst other concessions, a total renunciation of all that fair prospect of influence and territory, which his alliance with France would have secured.

The indignation of Francis, on being suddenly made acquainted with this change in the state of affairs may be more easily imagined then described. His contempt, however, exceeded the bounds even of his anger. The young princess went back to her mother, with what exultation it is unnecessary to say. And now the great object with the French party was to set aside her marriage with the Duke of Cleves altogether. Happily the Pope was able to do this for them without much difficulty; only, as usual, the transaction could not be completed without an immense amount of formality and delay. During this process the documents which Jeanne had drawn up, and signed with her own hand, became exceedingly useful; and the very expressions, which, under the former view of the case, would have been set aside as the mere bravado of a self-willed girl, were now brought forward as matters of weight in guiding the highest and most authoritative opinions.

At length Jeanne was formally and fully released, though not without a solemn protest on her part, uttered in person before assembled bishops and archbishops, and other dignitaries and men of rank, convened for the purpose. Happy would it have been for the princess, had her prudence taken warning from this escape from one impending danger, so far as to preserve her from plunging into another. But, as already said, Jeanne was impetuous, prompt, and somewhat self-reliant. It is not often that such characters are calm enough to be very penetrating, nor patient enough to be always on their guard. In her circumstances, and possessing as she did many brilliant at-

tractions, both of mind and person, it was not likely that the hand of so distinguished a princess, when once set free, should remain long unsolicited. It was known that her compulsory marriage had been a mere form; and amongst the many suitors who now sought her favour, Jeanne appears to have been permitted this time something like liberty of choice.

But while these affairs were in abeyance, an event occurred of the utmost importance to Jeanne, as well as to the destinies of France. This was the death of her uncle, Francis I., which took place in March, 1547. On this occasion Jeanne and her father held their mourning state alone, the queen of Navarre having previously retired, as was frequently the custom with pious ladies at that time, to a religious house, where she could practice without interruption those religious rites, and even austerities, which soothed her devotional spirit, and to which she fervently and believingly devoted the last years of her life.

By the death of a brother, so long and so tenderly beloved as Francis, life must have been deprived of its greatest charm to Marguerite; and from this time we hear no more of her appearance at court, or indeed on any public occasion. For a description of the last days of this lovely and remarkable woman, I gladly avail myself of the language of a writer who spared no pains to make himself intimately acquainted with the religious history of Béarn.*

"Retiring to a little village in Angoulême, Marguerite there joined a religious community of females,

* The author of 'The Reformation in the South-west Provinces of France.'

over whom she presided; but afterwards, having removed to the château of Odos, near Tarbes, she is said to have caught a severe cold, while watching a comet; and at this place she died, December 25, 1549."

It has been recorded with some satisfaction by Roman Catholic writers, that Marguerite in her dying moments kissed a crucifix that was held before her. "She who had embraced the cross in early life, and had so long borne it by patient endurance, might, surely, while in the agony of leaving one world, and in the earnest expectation of entering another, have kissed a crucifix without any superstitious feeling. The materialism of religion could have had but little influence over the senses of a dying Christian like the queen of Navarre, who, while her paralytic hands grasped a crucifix, sufficiently declared the sort of feeling with which she viewed it, by thrice uttering as she expired the name of Jesus!"

There is something, however, both in Marguerite and her daughter, so characteristic of themselves individually in the manner in which they embraced religious truth, that in contemplating both under this aspect, we are the better able to understand the nature of their influence over others, and over the eventful times in which they lived. The mother—the gentle and lovely Marguerite, with all her strong powers of mind and high attainments—was always peculiarly solicitous not to offend. Her letters are courteous almost to a fault, and in her correspondence with religious and learned men, even the truths which she alludes to, rather than states, are softened in all their angles and prominences by a kind of mysticism which

seems always to have pervaded the poetical and imaginative mind of the writer. To a woman thus constituted, religion would be especially a heart work, but still a work that might be transacted entirely between herself and her God. The sterner duty of bearing any direct testimony before the world, of upholding a certain form of religious truth, of raising a standard, and especially of fighting under it against superstition and error, would in all probability appear to her as uncalled for, as it would be foreign and repugnant to her whole nature. Marguerite was intimately acquainted with some holy men who conscientiously adhered to the Church of Rome; and with them, indeed with good men of either denomination, it was more congenial to her to hold heavenly converse, than to join in any of those fierce conflicts, in which characters of sterner mould were at that time often, and almost necessarily engaged.

We shall see with what spirit her daughter became animated, when the doctrines of the Reformation had at length found full acceptance in her clear and determined mind. The writer already alluded to has described her as *conferring not with flesh and blood*, but declaring herself openly and decidedly on the side of the reformed doctrines. But before this change takes place, we must follow the princess again to court; for she was yet far from having lost her taste for the pleasures and amusements in which her gay and buoyant spirit took peculiar delight.

Under the new sovereign, Henry II., husband to Catherine de Medici, the court of France assumed a different character. With this, however, these notices

have nothing to do, only so far as the dominant principles and characters by which it was ruled are connected with the further history of Jeanne d'Albret; and, unfortunately for her, that connection was unavoidable.

The new sovereign commenced his career by showing every mark of respect to his aunt, the queen of Navarre, as well as to some of her friends. Montmorency, who had fallen into disfavour with Francis, was recalled; and between him and the proud princes of Guise was divided the power which governed in the counsels of the king. At this time, Catherine, the queen consort, appears to have been little feared, and perhaps still less beloved. She was eminently one of those who can wait their time of action. As a wife her position was anything but favourable; being up to this time childless, while the affections of her husband were lavished upon a powerful and attractive rival.

When the princess of Béarn again appeared at the French court, with her beauty matured, her talents cultivated, and perhaps with her wit a little sharpened, it was natural that she should excite no small amount of admiration amongst the young nobles who surrounded the throne; while to the queen, whose disposition and habits were in almost every respect the exact opposite of her own, the frank, open, unflinching truthfulness of Jeanne was particularly offensive; and it is more than probable that her unguarded freedom of speech at this time sowed the seeds of future discord, and of bitter hatred on the part of Catherine.

In proportion as Jeanne d'Albret was prompt and

fearless in the expression of her sentiments, she was liberal in her charities, and lavish in her expenditure. Free as the wind, her generous spirit soared above all control. She feared no man, and even her mother's remonstrances failed in bringing her expenses within moderate limits. Flattered, admired, and courted, and still young; far removed too from that cautious mother who might have advised her better, what wonder if Jeanne, in making the most serious decision of a woman's life, should have decided with less of wisdom than of partial admiration.

Amongst the number of her suitors, which again included Philip of Spain, was a gay and gallant nobleman, Antoine de Bourbon, already bearing the high title of Duke de Vendôme, though only twenty years of age. Antoine was brave as a soldier—perhaps his only real virtue; for he was vain, vacillating, and luxurious; easily angered, and easily pacified, the very slave of every passing impulse. But then he was of high birth, noble in person, courtly in address, and the very pink of fashion in his dress and appointments. Strange, that one who habitually preferred the real and the true to all those blandishments which usually charm the young—that one who was continually startling the courtiers, and sometimes offending those high in authority, by the direct and unsparing manner in which her contempt for all vain and absurd assumption was manifested, should have been won by the very qualities which she all her life despised, and should place her confidence where everything she held by as most valuable and trustworthy in character was totally wanting. With such a companion, how was the earnest, truth-

loving, almost stern-principled Jeanne ever to be made happy? She resolved, however, to make the experiment; and such was her partial affection, that for some time she does not appear to have become fully aware of her mistake.

One of the unsuccessful competitors for the hand of the princess was the powerful and distinguished Duke of Guise. Perhaps Jeanne did better even with a fop for her husband, than she could have done with a man of unbending will and indomitable pride. At all events her choice was made. Many difficulties had to be overcome, the chief of which arose out of the disapprobation of her nearest connections; but at last this marriage ceremony, by which she became Duchess of Vendôme, was celebrated in October, 1548.

Consent to this union on the part of the king and queen of Navarre had been somewhat reluctantly granted. The king understood, perhaps better than his consort, what was meant by the reputation for extravagance and dissipation which already attached to the character of Antoine; and he might justly fear, that in the event of his own death, when his daughter would be raised to the throne, the interests of his people and kingdom would suffer under the uncertain rule of one who appeared but little likely to learn how to govern himself. But Antoine promised well. He openly favoured the party of Reform. He paid unqualified respect to the queen of Navarre, and, during the short remaining period of her life, was more restrained by her example and advice, than by any after influence which ever reached his heart or character.

Soon after their marriage, Jeanne and her husband

took up their residence at Pau. Here the duchess was received with all the native enthusiasm of that southern district, by a loyal people, who regarded her as their future sovereign. But even here, while increasing proofs of attachment were continually offered to the young couple, storms were gathering around which looked ominous of future disaster. The emperor, indignant at the marriage of one whom he had honoured by proposals for his son, evinced his disapprobation by grasping still more firmly the territory which he had so unscrupulously obtained. Philip, by a public edict, was proclaimed king of Navarre, and the frontiers of Béarn were threatened with invasion from Spain.

To these troubles were added that great domestic calamity which Jeanne was called to endure in the death of her mother, as already described; and close upon this followed another trouble not very patiently borne. For two years Jeanne remained childless, and her father made this an excuse for entering into negotiations with his old enemy on the other side of the Pyrenees, for a marriage between himself and the infanta of Spain. This alliance was to bring back to his family their lost territory; but it was an event which could not be contemplated by Jeanne without the most serious apprehensions.

All these annoyances, with the gradual development of her husband's character, must have sadly galled and chafed a spirit like that of Jeanne d'Albret. Some of them, at least, were placed in abeyance by the birth of a young prince, an event which was hailed with universal rejoicing throughout the whole surrounding

districts. Even Antoine for a while assumed his better nature; while the king evinced such unbounded delight, that he even resigned his own matrimonial projects in favour of the future heir to the throne.

Again, however, Jeanne proved herself wanting in discretion on a point as vital as that in which she had already so strongly erred. With a faithful attachment to the guardian of her own childhood, she persuaded herself that no one could do better for her child; and, forgetting the time which had intervened, Jeanne committed the nurture of her infant to the same lady, now an elderly matron, married a second time, and residing at a great distance from Navarre. The consequence was, that the old lady nursed the child to death. Her own system was one of entire seclusion, in a heated atmosphere, from every breath of external air. Thus, before the expiration of more than twelve months, the little prince sickened and died. The mother, hearing of his illness, flew to the spot, and seeing by the aspect of her child how he must have been treated, it is said that she repoached the old lady with more severity than justice. The king of Navarre threw the blame upon his daughter, and commenced his matrimonial speculations a second time; while the people of Béarn were universally thrown into a state of the deepest disappointment and distress.

Again, however, their hopes revived. A second time the parents and their loyal subjects exulted in the birth of a prince. The child was taken to Pau, there to be exhibited by the delighted king to the gaze of the admiring populace. Possibly Jeanne might feel

less responsibility now that her father took the management of the child into his own hands. However this might be, an accident occurred to the infant, owing to the thoughtlessness of a lady to whose charge it had been committed. The injury was concealed until too late to save the life of the little prince, and again the court and the kingdom were thrown into despair.

This time the king reproached his daughter for her treatment of her children as being absolutely inhuman. Henry was a different man now that he was left, by the death of his noble wife, to the counsels of his own heart; and there were other and more humiliating sources of dissatisfaction between him and Jeanne. But she had still her high unbroken spirit, and she could bear this and all her troubles with a buoyancy which, up to this period of her life, had never failed her. A third time Jeanne was likely to become a mother, and now her father insisted that the child should first see the light in his own castle at Pau. There had been a playful compact made with the king, that if her child was a boy Jeanne should sing a certain Gascon song while under her severest suffering; and when she heard her father's step approaching, true to her promise, the princess sang in a clear and glad voice a popular ditty of the country, in which the Virgin was accustomed to be invoked by the Béarnaise matrons. With this jocund *chanson* for his natal hymn, the illustrious Henry IV. of France was ushered into the world.

We quote again from a traveller well acquainted with the scenes amongst which the infant hero first

drew his breath :—" The stranger who visits the château of Pau is shown the chamber in which Henry IV. first saw the light, on the 13th of December, 1553. From thence he is led to another apartment, where, arranged with a degree of gorgeous splendour, but little in keeping with the massive and venerable character of the château, is the cradle in which the infant monarch was nursed, or, as some say, only carried to his baptism. It consists of one entire tortoise-shell; and not the least remarkable part of its history is the fact that when, during the reign of terror, the furious populace rushed upon the palace, determined to destroy every vestige of royalty, it was secretly conveyed out of their reach, and its place supplied by the generosity of a gentleman of Paü, who, happening to have one of the same kind amongst his collection of curiosities, suffered his own to be destroyed, and afterwards restored the real treasure.

" From the state-room in which this cradle is preserved, the visitor walks out upon a balcony in front of the building, which commands a magnificent view of the river, the valley, and the mountains. There is a little tower at the south-west corner of the château, which was used as a private study by Jeanne d'Albret when queen of Navarre. That which is called her apartment in the tower is small and unadorned, but it commands a view combining all that is beautiful and grand in nature, and which may well be supposed to have refreshed her harassed mind amidst the troubles and disappointments she was destined to endure.

" Was it in this chamber the undaunted resolution of the queen was formed, which prompted the utter.

ance of those memorable words recorded by Beza,—'That sooner than ever again go to mass, or suffer her kingdom or her child to do so, she would, if it were possible, cast them into the depths of the sea to hinder it'? Or where did the scene take place which the Cardinal Ferrara states that he witnessed, when the queen, with passionate tenderness, clasped the young prince in her arms, and uttered a long and earnest exhortation to him never to attend mass in any way whatever; adding, that if he disobeyed her in that, she would disinherit him, and no longer consider herself his mother."

The illustrious prince, but yet an infant, must again claim our attention. The nurse selected on this occasion was neither an old woman nor a lady. The peasant women of Béarn can scarcely be rivalled in any part of the world for their vigorous and healthy appearance; and it was to one of these, residing in a neighbouring village on the banks of the Gave, that the young prince was committed for the nurture of his infancy. Scarcely could a sweeter spot have been selected, or one in which the atmosphere and surrounding objects could more fully convey the impression of health and elasticity of spirits. The immediate tract of country is called the "Garden of Béarn," in which stands the now ancient castle of Coarraze, famous for being associated with the memory of Henry IV. Here were the "scenes of his youthful sports, as well as the situation where he enjoyed the advantages of that rational and vigorous training to which none but a noble-minded mother like Jeanne d'Albret would have entrusted a princely son.

"When first taken from the hands of his nurse, Henry was committed to the care of Suzanne de Bourbon Busset, baroness de Miossens, a woman distinguished for her many virtues and high excellence; and in order to carry out with better effect the system of education which the queen had adopted for her son, he was sent with his governess to this remote situation, where the purest air, the simplest diet, and the most natural exercise, could be enjoyed without the interruption of courtly visitors or affairs of state. The directions of Jeanne d'Albret were, that the future monarch should be trained like a child of the mountaineers; and, faithful to her important trust, the baroness exercised over her pupil a discipline resembling that of a Spartan mother. He was treated like the children of the village,—was clothed in the same dress, and partook of their enjoyments and their sports. His food was often the same dry bread; he wore the bonnet of the peasants, the same kind of woollen vest,—trod the mountain-paths with bare feet,—fought, not unfrequently, with his little comrades, and excelled in many of their favourite games. For many years of his life, Henry knew no other language than the patois of Béarn,—a knowledge which contributed much in after years to endear him to the people of this country. It is said of him, that a *bon mot* or a lively sally in his maternal language was one of the most powerful means of influence he could employ over the young men whom he led to the conquest of Paris; and whom, by a happy repartee couched in their native tongue, he could beguile into forgetfulness of all their fatigues."

In little more than twelve months from the birth of his grandson, the king of Navarre, while at the head of a military expedition, was seized with a fatal malady, and expired in May, 1555. By this event, the position of Jeanne d'Albret became one of heavy and almost undivided responsibility; for although she lost no time in issuing an order which conferred upon her husband the dignity of having his name associated with her own as sovereign of Navarre, the time was coming, and perhaps had already come, when Jeanne was to find herself peculiarly alone in the midst of powerful enemies and treacherous allies, her individual burdens and anxieties as little sympathized with as her highest enjoyments.

Scarcely, indeed, was the crown of Navarre placed upon her brow, before Jeanne was made to feel painfully that there must be no rest for the head thus encircled. Henry, the reigning king of France, evinced a jealousy of the fickle Antoine, or rather an envy of his possessions in the south, which gave rise to a variety of stratagems for depriving the family of Albret of that remaining portion of their territory which they still held at the perpetual risk of aggressions from Spain. Antoine was summoned to the court of St. Germain, where such proposals as the king and his ministers had concocted were laid before him, under the most flattering and attractive form. Treacherously as the bribe was offered, Antoine seized the bait, and would have actually bartered away the kingdom of Navarre, but for a recollection, rather startling at such a moment, that he could do nothing in matters so important without the sanction of his

wife. Jeanne, in the meantime, had been informed of what was going on, and she also laid her plans. For the first time in her life, this noble-hearted woman seems to have felt the imperative necessity of acting secretly. She acted also with amazing promptness and decision; and by the exercise of all her natural energy, now under the control of prudence, she managed, with a dexterity worthy of an experienced statesman, so to frustrate the plans of her powerful relative the king of France, as to retain her royal territory intact, and with that to bind herself more closely than ever to the hearts of her people; while their confidence in her wisdom and integrity became deeper under every successive trial.

All this, however, was not accomplished by Jeanne without considerable personal risk. She was under the necessity of appearing herself at that treacherous court where her husband had been so easily ensnared. On this occasion, Jeanne d'Albret proved how entirely she *could* master herself when matters of importance required that she should do so. At the court of her cousin she committed no indiscretion, spoke no inadvertent word, but entered fully and calmly into the proposals so audaciously made to her husband for ceding the territory of Béarn to the crown of France, in exchange for other possessions; and when the assembled council waited for her answer, without betraying her secret indignation, Jeanne replied, that if on returning to her kingdom she found her subjects willing to make these changes, it should even be as his Majesty was pleased to propose. With this calmly uttered and fair conclusion, Jeanne was permitted tc

depart in safety; nor does it appear that she was suspected of being otherwise than weak enough to fall into the snare.

Jeanne knew well what she was doing. She might safely promise that if her people consented she would offer no opposition. On her return to the south, she was accompanied by commissioners deputed from the French court to receive the cession of Béarn. But all her measures were matured. All her plans had been faithfully carried out by the parties to whom they were committed, and when the purpose of the French king became fully known, a storm arose amongst those hardy mountaineers of Béarn, under which the commissioners were fain to solicit a safe-conduct to the frontiers,—a favour which the queen granted, bidding them bear back to their king this message: "That her subjects, far from yielding to persuasion upon the projected transfer of Béarn to the crown of France, had been so transported with fury at the simple report of such a project, that it was quite out of her power to control their repugnance."

Terrible indeed was the tumult which ensued. The people rose as one body to execute summary vengeance upon their countrymen who had treacherously joined in this plot, and some who had held high office had to fly for their lives. The most prompt and energetic measures were immediately taken for strengthening every means of defence; and throughout all the departments one universal determination prevailed, to defend to the last their ancient territories.

In the midst of this confusion and uproar, Jeanne had returned with her husband, and she was soon

able to assure her people that all had been saved which they held most dear. Happier auspices there could scarcely be than those under which the young queen assumed her place as sovereign over a people who welcomed her with all the enthusiasm of those who honoured alike the dignity of her crown, and her wisdom and integrity as a woman. Even Antoine received more than his due share in the public homage which blended with the general rejoicings. The little prince was sent for to complete the happiness of the occasion; and, vigorous in health and jocund in spirit, was exhibited to the people, while his parents exulted in his strength and beauty. But the mother had deeper feelings than could be shared in, even by her husband. It is said by her biographer, that "as she gazed upon her child with tears of joy, she vowed that nothing should compel her to alienate one of his rights."

For the first time the king and queen of Navarre now took full possession of the Castle of Pau as their royal residence. It was then rich in memorials of the refined taste of Marguerite d'Angoulême. Paintings adorned the walls, and many curious works of art embellished the different apartments, amongst which there was a profusion of embroidery and other productions of Marguerite's own hand, sufficient in number to have supplied occupation for the whole of a moderate lifetime. Jeanne also had indulged her natural liberality in the collection of rare and valuable gems and other curiosities, with which the state rooms of the palace were lavishly adorned. But the gem and crown of all to her was her brave and splendid boy, who, in proportion as other sources of satisfaction

failed her, became the joy and support of her life, supplying that one thing needful to every woman's high ambition—something beyond herself, for which to hope and to suffer—to live and to die.

Nothing now was wanting to the dignity of the sovereigns but the ceremony of their coronation. The pomp of this solemnity was somewhat shadowed, to the mind of Jeanne, by a comparison between the splendour of her ancestors on similar occasions, when the kingdom of Navarre was undivided, and her own reduced possessions at the present time. But the loyalty of her subjects supplied their want of number; and notwithstanding the secret troubles of her heart, this must have been a proud and happy moment in the experience of the queen.

The religious interests of their kingdom were not neglected by the new sovereigns. Antoine, as already said, evinced a preference more eager than prudent in its manifestation for the Reform party. Jeanne could do nothing except from conviction. She had been brought up by her uncle Francis I. in strict adherence to the Romish Church; and, notwithstanding the example of her mother, and the almost idolatrous attachment of the Béarnais to one whose very writings were treasured by them as if they had dropped from the pen of an angel; notwithstanding her association with the learned and pious men who had been her mother's friends, Jeanne yet wished to be fully persuaded in her own mind before taking any decided steps towards embracing the reformed religion as her own.

Possibly the clear mind of the queen was perplexed by the differences of opinion which she found amongst

persons of understanding and virtue. No doubt she felt the vast magnitude of the question in its bearings upon the vital interests of mankind. If Jeanne was less dependent upon advisers than the generality of her sex, she still needed friends with whom to communicate on topics of such importance. One of the most intimate of these was the duchess of Ferrara, whose mind and sentiments resembled her own. Another was Gourdon, a nobleman of influence, who had already espoused the views of Calvin. The letters of Jeanne to these correspondents—indeed, all her letters which have been preserved—are marked by strong contrast with those of her mother. Direct, concise, and earnest like herself, they admit of no courtly phraseology, and still less is the purpose of the writer ever veiled by that ingenious yet elegant verbosity which sometimes entirely concealed her mother's meaning.

Allied to a consort of such a temperament, it would not have been surprising had the shallow and vacillating Antoine been thrown back into his proper position of worthlessness and obscurity. It is highly to the credit of Jeanne that such an assertion of her own superiority, such low estimate as she must have entertained of her husband's real capabilities, found no place in the system of conduct which she consistently pursued. Indeed, for some time she treated the king more as what she wished him to be, than as what he really was, upholding his dignity by every means in her power, though her ingenuity and good management were often and sorely taxed in repairing the injuries which his vain and inconsiderate conduct

would otherwise have inflicted upon the interests of the state.

If it requires a woman of more than common discretion and even fortitude to make a good queen—a fact which few would be disposed to dispute—it certainly requires even more than this to make a good wife to a weak-headed, vain, and worthless man. Yet all this was Jeanne d'Albret: as a queen, worthy to be the honoured mother of an illustrious king—as a woman, worthy of still higher honour, because she could act with discretion and true magnanimity of soul under that trial which the Greek Slave in Byron's Sardanapalus calls the bitterest of all miseries:—

"To love whom we esteem not."

On assuming the sovereign dignity, Jeanne allowed her husband to act for some time on his own responsibility. She would gladly have seen him a king—and beyond that, a just, wise, and good king. But in this position he brought accumulated troubles upon the state by his imprudence and caprice; until the higher classes of the people were offended, and the lower became turbulent and discontented; so that Jeanne was compelled, against her inclination, to take more of the government into her own hands. She had striven faithfully to make her husband beloved, but all his equals despised him. She had endeavoured to make him powerful, but he was too inconsistent to be steadily obeyed. What could Jeanne do more? What could she do now, especially when Papal edicts were threatening the safety of her Protestant subjects; and when the many Reformers who had been indebted for a safe asylum to the sovereign of Béarn,

were beginning to tremble even in that retirement where they had so long enjoyed the cordial fellowship of congenial minds. It was, indeed, high time for Jeanne to exert herself, and she did so with a spirit and determination which showed plainly that she meant to retain her kingdom, in spite of all her husband's recklessness; and that, come what might, her subjects should feel that in her they had an undaunted and faithful sovereign.

Antoine was compelled to acknowledge that his consort was right in the measures she adopted for conciliating the papal power. But before these were fully carried out, the king of France, now converted into a bitter enemy, began to form plans against the peace of Navarre which it would have been impossible for so inferior a power to oppose by open war. Zealous in his support of the Church of Rome, the French king insisted upon the entire interdiction of the reformed religion by the sovereigns of Béarn throughout their dominions; and in case of their refusal to comply, he threatened them with the despatch of an army under the Duke of Guise, to take possession of their principality. Jeanne was compelled to act again, and she did so with an equal amount of promptness and decision. Always equal to the occasion, she had only to look around her to see what was best to be done, and it was immediately accomplished. In this instance, she requested some of the most obnoxious Calvinist ministers to retire from her dominions; and when every measure had been adopted which the safety of the realm demanded, she set out for Paris, determined to see the king herself, accom-

panied by her husband and the young prince. In all probability Jeanne thought that her cousin would be softened by the sight of the child. What stronger appeal could be offered by a mother! and perhaps beyond this, she was proud of her noble boy, and wished to exhibit him at court.

On their journey the travellers were received with the warmest welcome at the different towns then under the government of the king of Navarre; especially at Bordeaux and Rochelle. At this latter place, so staunch in its adherence to the reformed religion, the people thought to entertain the queen with dramatic representations ridiculing the practices of the Church of Rome. But Jeanne looked on with great gravity, and would not once smile during the performance. Just at that crisis of her affairs such amusements must have appeared to her not only ill-judged, but dangerous in the extreme. Antoine cared little for her scruples. He was amused to his heart's content; and not satisfied with the laughter of the moment, he took the performers under his protection, and liberally rewarded them.

Ill-treatment, violence, brutal injury, women have sometimes had to bear from their husbands, and some have borne their trials well. Jeanne d'Albret had to bear the constant *silliness* of hers, to a degree which not only disgusted her friends—to say nothing of herself, but actually thwarted her plans, and hindered the carrying out so many of those high principles upon which her own conduct was so consistently based. As usual, a blunder which nearly proved fatal to the purpose of their journey, was committed by Antoine

immediately on his arrival in Paris. It was an incautious assumption of power which interfered with the kingly prerogative of Henry, whose displeasure was aggravated by this imprudent act.

The king received his visitors with coldness and hauteur, reminding Antoine, in allusion to this last offence, of what he had often told him before, that there could be but one king in France. A discussion then took place, of no very conciliating nature, in the midst of which the little prince of Béarn, weary of being detained in an outer room, suddenly burst in upon the disputants, and "with his merry smile made Henry forget his wrath. Calling the little prince to his side, the king placed him on his knee, embraced him, and paid Queen Jeanne many commendations on her son's beauty of countenance and artless manner."* From this time all seems to have gone on more prosperously with the visitors at the court. Won over by the charms of the young prince, a compact was entered into preparatory to an alliance between him and the king's youngest daughter, Marguerite de Valois. But Jeanne, while rejoicing in this amicable turn of affairs, looked thoughtfully, and with discriminating eye upon all around her. She now beheld, perhaps for the first time, the alarming height to which the power of the house of Guise was rising; she learned something of the projects which occupied the different parties around the throne, by the alliances already formed for the young princes; and she must have weighed, with no little anxiety, the religious questions with which these complicated schemes were more or less connected.

* Life of Jeanne d'Albret.

At length, weary of her residence at a court where no post of usefulness or dignity was assigned to her husband, Jeanne determined to return to her home in the south, and the king offered no opposition to the departure of his guests. One stipulation alone was made—that the young prince should be left behind. With Catherine de Medici for his adopted mother, what a destiny must this have threatened! Jeanne firmly declined this honour for her son, with what secret feelings can only be supposed; and as the proposal was not insisted upon, the little party set out again for Pau.

France was at this time plunged into universal confusion and alarm by successive tidings of the victories obtained by the arms of Spain; and had these been followed up, as there was every reason to apprehend, Navarre must have first fallen under the advancing power of its old enemy. The Duke of Guise had been baffled by the Spanish general in the midst of his successes; but nothing could obscure the sunshine of his prosperity. He returned to be invested with authority scarcely inferior to that of the king himself; and amongst the honours heaped upon him, demanded without a denial that a marriage should be contracted between the dauphin and his own niece, the beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart.

While universal homage was being rendered to the rising power, and that power bearing always along with it the public interests, and the secret machinations of the papal court, the opposite party in which the Protestant cause was implicated sunk in proportion, and with it fell the hopes of its numerous adhe-

rents in the southern provinces. The sovereigns of Navarre were necessarily affected by all these influences; and when summoned again to court to take part in the ceremonies which attended the marriage of the dauphin, they must have looked with considerable anxiety upon the appointment of their own place in the splendid and brilliant array.

All due respect, however, was shown to the king and queen of Navarre on this occasion. They ranked next to the royal family, and their close relationship, as well as royal dignity, appear to have been fully recognized. Under these flattering auspices, they remained some time at the court, sharing in the festivities and experiencing no interruption to the amicable intercourse which they were permitted to enjoy. During this season of prosperity, Antoine found courage and resolution to lead an army into the south for the recovery of Navarre. As might have been anticipated, the expedition failed, owing in some degree to his habit of placing confidence in mean and treacherous favourites.

Indeed, this unfortunate prince seems to have been peculiarly subject to the weakness of listening more willingly, and opening his heart more freely, to those who were either too weak or too false to advise him well, than to those who would have been his safest and best counsellors. Thus, when residing in Béarn, his bosom friend was a man who had been singularly false to his country, and who for that reason had been selected by Philip as the agent of whatever purpose he aimed to effect by working upon the wavering mind of the king. Like most persons naturally weak

and vain, Antoine yielded willingly to the persuasions of his inferiors; but he could be as obstinate and self-willed as any one under what he chose to consider unwarranted interference or dictation. Thus, ever in the power of the favourite of the moment, he was sometimes most impracticable under the arguments of real friends.

Such was this man—a Bourbon, first prince of the blood, and already identified with the Protestant cause. Such was the man respecting whom the Reformers had painfully to feel that their interests were in some degree committed. Such was the man whom the noble-hearted Jeanne had still more painfully to feel that the welfare, and almost the preservation of her kingdom, herself, and her child, was so far dependent, as to be every hour endangered by his weakness, or sacrificed to his folly.

In those great national conferences which took place about this time, and which were signalized in their fatal results, under the well-known denomination of the League, the queen of Navarre had the mortification of finding that the claims of her diminished territory which she had so earnestly pleaded had been entirely overlooked or forgotten. In the great movements of those mighty powers by which the province of Béarn was surrounded, the claims of mere justice had but little weight. The armies of Spain might at any moment sweep over the fair gardens which lay at the feet of her father's native mountains, and the great world associated in the compact of the League, would scarcely ask what ruin they had left behind.

In February 1559, the queen of Navarre gave birth

to a daughter, on whom was conferred the honour of being called Catherine, after her godmother Catherine de Medici. But the happiness which might otherwise have attended this event, was deeply shadowed by the general aspect of surrounding affairs. A double alliance had been formed between the royal family of France and that of Guise; and the princes of that haughty and intolerant house, assuming with every added dignity an increase of power over the national councils, presumed so far upon the recently established League with Philip of Spain, as to stir up the mind of the king with fresh indignation and horror against the heresies which were represented by those parties as pervading his very court, and even approaching his royal person. In consequence of these representations, the severest restrictions were enforced; secret information was invited and liberally rewarded; while the terrors of inquisitorial enactments diffused throughout society a general feeling of apprehension and distrust.

Every change in the aspect of political affairs now threatened especially the peace of the little principality of Béarn. Jeanne had now more than ever at stake, in the two precious children in whom her affections centred, with that fondness which so often marks the love of a woman who finds neither sympathy nor companionship in her husband. These, and her kingdom, her faithful people, with all their ancient rights, of which they were so proudly jealous; and that liberty of conscience which they were just beginning fully to appreciate and enjoy—What else in the whole world had Jeanne but these? In her love for her people she only widened and extended the affections first

claimed by her children, and in both she now began to live that life of heroism, for which nature and circumstances had been so long preparing her.

About this period of her life, and while the call to individual action was yet only heard in the distance, the queen of Navarre began more than ever to fix her mind upon severe and laborious study. Learned in ancient as well as modern languages, there were few subjects too deep or grave for the occupation of her mind. Her hours of study were frequent and prolonged, her personal habits marked by a self-denial the more remarkable in one who had originally been of gay and social temperament. In these characteristics Jeanne was now so changed, that her biographer says of her, she was "given to melancholy;" further stating, that, "her ladies would often observe the queen sitting in the attitude of deep thought, totally unobservant of those around her; then if suddenly appealed to, her magnificent eyes would beam with intelligence, as she joined in the discourse with great interest. This animation, however, lasted but for a brief interval, when she relapsed again into meditation.

Well might the queen forget all present things in these deep meditations; her thoughts not improbably turning to the complicated tissue of entanglements which the hatred of intolerance, and the ingenuity of bigotry were continually weaving around her. Perhaps already, too, her prophetic eye—for all who think and feel deeply, and have much at stake, are in some sense prophetic—might see the martyr flames arising, the sword unsheathed, and the rivers of blood that were to bathe the very feet of her own child. Or she might

behold him, still a boy, at the head of his faithful followers, cheering them on to the field of battle, with a heart still as light as the plume which played above his princely brow. Or still further in the distance, might she not see dimly the dagger of the assassin plunged into his gallant heart, before it had learned the true value of the life it was yielding up?

Amidst all her meditations, and no wonder they were many and deep, Queen Jeanne never permitted herself to lose sight of immediate and practical duty. The education of the young prince claimed her especial care. He was well taught in the ancient languages, the queen herself correcting these exercises; "and when she was separated from her son, his preceptor forwarded them for her inspection." At a very early age he had made astonishing progress under his mother's careful direction; and there is the more reason for attributing much of the credit of his education to the queen, because his subsequent life was not marked by any natural tendency to these pursuits.

But while Queen Jeanne sate alone in her distant home, and while the ruling powers of continental Europe were leagued together for the purpose of uprooting heresy from Christendom, the arm of persecution in France was suddenly arrested for a moment by a most unlooked-for and appalling event. This was the death-wound of the king, received from the lance of Montgomery, at a tournament held in celebration of the marriage of the princess Elizabeth with Philip of Spain. Immediately upon his father's death, the young Francis, weak in mind and body, and then only sixteen years of age, was placed upon the throne.

When this intelligence reached the distant province of Béarn, Jeanne d'Albret, with her natural penetration, saw exactly what ought to be done, and that without a moment's delay. Her husband, from his rank and relationship, would be the legitimate protector of the prince during his minority. Now, if ever, the house of Guise might be humbled, or if not humbled, placed at a greater distance from the throne. Now, if ever, justice might be done to the rival interests of religion, and even liberty of conscience established on a sure foundation. It was that exact crisis—that precise turning-point, at which action and inaction are life and death.

But—and with such characters as Antoine there always *is* a but—eager as he had been before to assert his rights, he would not move now. If he did not fear, he hesitated. He did worse: he consulted his bosom friend, the treacherous and secret agent of Philip of Spain. The remonstrances of his wife, though eloquent with earnest feeling, were utterly fruitless; and how was this to be borne gracefully by a woman of her quick penetration and foresight? How was it to be endured by one who saw in an instant what ought to be done, and could be done only *then?* Jeanne had no need of time for making her calculations. The event which came upon her like a flash of light, in the sudden illumination of that moment, revealed to her a glorious future, only to be gained by instantaneous action. In that future she beheld her husband established at the French court as the natural and lawful guardian of the young king, now scarcely past the age of boyhood; but if

Antoine should hesitate—if he should yield to his false advisers, she knew but too well that there were powerful parties already on the scene of action, quick to perceive, and take advantage of every moment of delay. Impatient under this absurd and most fatal hesitancy, the wife and mother pleaded with all the earnestness of her impetuous character; and when persuasion failed, she tried the force of irony, representing to her husband the miserable figure he would make, lagging up to the French court, after the powerful Guise had taken possession of the first place of influence there. But this also failed, and then followed that natural outburst of maternal feeling, when, taking the young prince by the hand, she led him to his father, and pleaded for the rights and high destinies of their child, even if the king could forget his own.

Truly, if ever man was created for the express purpose of trying the patience of his wife, it must have been this Antoine de Bourbon—husband of such a woman, too! In fine, he could not be roused to action in this great crisis of his life; but listened more and more to the ingenious sophistries of his confidant, the Bishop of Mende, with other advisers equally false to his true interests, though none perhaps so openly devoid of principle, or secretly so entirely bought over to serve the purposes of Spain.

The queen of Navarre had now but one hope left. She wrote to the prince of Condé, her husband's brother, urging him to aid and strengthen her endeavours. And at last, after a whole month had been wasted in this manner—a month of rich value to the

more active and determined parties around the person of the young king Antoine consented to proceed on his mission, provided his brother, and a powerful array of princes and noblemen, would form his escort to Paris.

Jeanne must have known that the enterprise, so madly delayed, would now be too late to accomplish the purposes at one time so eagerly anticipated; and to add to her vexation and perplexity, she was now informed that Philip of Spain, indignant that this dilatory movement should at last be really made, was about to cross the frontier of her territories with an armed force, against which she could have little hope of contending.

Many women would have sunk under these accumulated disasters and disappointments; for what can break the noble spirit of a wife so effectually as the dead weight of a helpless husband; or, worse still, the galling chain of indissoluble union with an unprincipled one. But Jeanne was not a woman of this temperament. Her spirit, never daunted, rose always with the occasion, and whatever work there was to do, she had now learned, must be done by herself. No sooner then was she left alone, than, hearing of this new danger, she set about to meet it with unflinching energy and promptness. It is true this was the one danger which she was always dreading for her kingdom more than any other; but even this she was determined should not find her unprepared. In the midst of her perplexities, Jeanne had always her faithful friends whom she knew how to value. With some of these she now consulted. To one, especially trusted,

she committed the care of her children; and then, with such attendants as she deemed necessary, set out on a journey of inspection to all the garrisons, and most important places of defence throughout her kingdom, ordering ample supplies of food and ammunition, with reinforcements of military wherever it was most likely for an attack to be made.

Beloved as the queen of Navarre always was by her devoted subjects, it must have cheered her lonely heart on this occasion to meet, as she did in her progress, the most enthusiastic and loyal demonstrations of attachment from the population of every town through which she passed. With a noble, manly, and faithful consort, what might not have been done at the head of such a people? Alas! it is always this question, —What might have been? that sends through the human heart the sharpest pang which it is capable of enduring.

Nor was it alone against dangers threatening from without, that the queen of Navarre had to defend herself. A more secret and insidious enemy had worked his way into the interior of her kingdom. The cardinal of Lorraine, in concert with Philip of Spain, had formed a plot for taking possession by treachery of Jeanne's powerful fortress of Bayonne, thus securing the highway into Spain. In consequence of this discovery having been made to the queen by her mother's faithful friend Montmorency, she immediately frustrated the scheme by placing in that important position one of her most trusty barons as governor of the fortress of Bayonne.

In the meantime poor Antoine had met with insults,

in his tardy enterprise, beyond perhaps any amount of degradation to which his wife could have conceived it possible that he would be subjected. He had ridden royally with his noble escort a great part of the way, but was not allowed the attendance of his friends so far as Paris. Indeed, he had been received at court in the coldest and most insulting manner. Alone, and unsupported by any mind of stronger fibre than his own, Antoine had taken fright, and had consequently submitted to everything required of him, even to the expression of his perfect approval of the existing state of things, which of course included the placing of the house of Guise in the position which ought to have been his own. Under his peculiar circumstances, he seems to have feared all parties, and trusted none; for even the ambassador of our queen Elizabeth, sent on a friendly mission, could with difficulty obtain an audience with him. Yet Antoine, at this very time, was standing in the most responsible position as head of the great Protestant cause, and as such, would have been willingly acknowledged by the Protestant association already forming itself into a powerful body.

In no respect could this miserable Antoine ever be trusted to conduct himself with even tolerable prudence. His vanity laid him open to every flattering bait. Besides which, he was constantly forming foolish projects of his own, by which not only the interests, but even the very existence of his territory as a kingdom was often seriously endangered. During his present stay in Paris, he had one of these projects in hand; and while his noble wife was engaged in de-

fending her kingdom from her open enemy of Spain, and her more secret but not less dangerous enemies of the Guise faction within, Antoine was actually bartering her possessions away to Philip, planning a journey for himself and his wife to Madrid, for the purpose of completing this contract, and undertaking for the same purpose the conduct of the Princess Elizabeth on her journey to Spain as the future consort of Philip.

With what temper and disposition Jeanne must have journeyed to meet her husband and the young Spanish queen at Bordeaux, may be better imagined than described. Most royally, however, the queen is said to have received the young princess, and conducted her through her own territory; though even in this her noble hospitality, she was unable to acquit herself to the satisfaction of Philip, who took umbrage at the queen of Navarre assuming precedence of rank in her own dominions.

But the time had now come for Jeanne d'Albret to think less of the trifling accidents of time and place, and more of the great realities of life and eternity, than perhaps she had ever done before. The mere enjoyments of present existence must have faded rapidly from her mind as the character of her husband developed itself through succeeding years. With her deepening impressions of the importance of true religion, the time at last had come, when that great decision must be made which finally influenced her own destiny, and that of her son, in so remarkable a manner. This was the choice of religion as a personal and individual matter—whether she would really embrace

the Protestant faith as her own, and as something to live or die for, or whether she would remain only its well-wisher and the friend of its faithful adherents. Her mother had been this, and it was consistent with a nature like that of the gentle Marguerite to shrink from any open and decisive measure which might seem likely, not only to frustrate the good she was anxious to promote, but liable also to bring down upon her head that heaviest of all calamities to her—the displeasure of her idolized brother. The times were different then, and many were the well-wishers of the reformed religion who did not feel themselves called upon to make open profession of any difference of belief. Jeanne was not only differently circumstanced, but differently constituted from her mother. With her there could be no half measures: she had only to be thoroughly convinced in her own mind, and then action followed quick as thought. As already stated, she had been brought up by her uncle Francis I. in strict conformity to the Roman Catholic form of religion; but she must have been deeply influenced in after-life by association with the persecuted Protestants, "amongst whom the memory of her mother was cherished with the tenderest affection; and besides that beautiful exemplification of the Christian character left to her in her mother's writings and example, she had the additional influence of her mother's friends, as a living testimony of the purer doctrines of the reformed religion.

"The heart of Jeanne d'Albret was not callous to these impressions. While her vacillating husband appeared for a time to be convinced by the arguments

of those around him, the nobler-minded queen, when once her heart had been made the subject of deep convictions, *conferring not with flesh and blood*, declared herself openly and decidedly to be on the side of the reformed doctrines; and from that time the little court of Béarn became a place of refuge for the oppressed Protestants, both of France and Germany, who richly repaid her hospitality by disseminating the seeds of religious truth amongst her people."

It was not long after the power of the house of Guise had become dominant in France, that the Protestant party united themselves by a secret combination, known as the conspiracy of Amboise. In consequence of the betrayal of this plot to the cardinal of Lorraine, the whole country was thrown into a state of suspicion and terror, which threatened the most calamitous consequences, especially to the territory of Béarn. A rigorous and unsparing search for implicated parties was instituted; and under the merciless vengeance of the Guise faction, a total extermination of this heresy was threatened, attended with the most cruel massacres, the bare rumours of which spread consternation through the distant provinces. The king and queen of Navarre were imperatively called upon to rid their dominions of every trace of the heretical party. It was impossible not to anticipate the most disastrous consequences to the court of Navarre, so many of the nearest relatives and most faithful adherents of the royal family being implicated. Condé, the brother of the king, had been accused and summoned to his trial, but for this time permitted to escape. He was received on his ac-

quittal with the warmest welcome by Jeanne, who would gladly have persuaded him to remain quietly under the protection of her little court at Nérac in Béarn. Antoine, thinking he could better ensure his own safety by espousing the opposite party, was soon engaged at the head of a company of men-at-arms, valiantly dispersing an army on its way to assist his former friends.

For no other purpose than that of better illustrating the true character of Jeanne d'Albret, are these important affairs even thus slightly touched upon. Any history of this eventful period would be out of the question, as well as out of place here; only it is necessary, to understand the magnanimity of Henry's noble mother, that we should cast a momentary glance over the scene by which she was surrounded, the better to calculate how much she had at stake when the great decision of her life was made. Nor must we forget that these calculations have to include her children as well as herself—her son's kingdom as well as her own. Under this pressure of affairs, then, we have to observe the conduct of Jeanne d'Albret. At this period of her life, and especially under recent circumstances, there can be little doubt that she had seen more to repel than to attract in the religious profession of the dominant party; and by no idea of personal risk was she likely to be deterred from making her decision on what she believed to be the side of right. In the midst of these dangers, then, and when the aspect of public affairs was darkening on every hand, we find her entering the church of St. Martin, still standing in

Pau but a few paces from the château; and on Easter Day, 1560, receiving the communion for the first time, according to the rites of the Reformed Church.

"This public avowal of her sentiments was followed, as might have been expected, by the sentence of excommunication from the court of Rome, as well as by a declaration of the forfeiture of her crown, and absolution of her subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Throughout the whole of the conflict which she subsequently maintained against the enemies of truth, we find in the history of this noble-hearted queen a series of trials and difficulties that would have subdued a spirit not peculiarly and providentially fitted for the support of the just and righteous cause she had espoused."

Jeanne was now openly embarked upon that troubled sea of conflicting opinions which knew no rest. Dark waves were swelling around her—tempests threatening on every hand—no public safety—no domestic peace—nothing but her children to solace her poor woman's heart; and, above all, her trust in God. She had need at this period of her life of every consolation and support which a decided religious faith could afford, for the time was fast approaching when the fallacy of all other foundations of hope and trust would be tested by experience even more severe and painful than any which she had yet endured. The religious profession which Jeanne had chosen as her own, must also be that of her son. He had no other friend and adviser; and perhaps she would not easily have been brought to trust him to any other, for the forming of his principles and the direction of his opening mind.

The same religious opinions were also becoming increasingly those of his future subjects in Béarn. This had been recently indicated with sufficient clearness of expression, when an emissary of the cardinal of Lorraine had passed through the provinces on a mission from the Church of Rome; and, when dispensing his gracious benediction to the people, had been hooted through the streets of one of the principal towns with shouts of derisive laughter, glad enough no doubt to be able to escape with his life. The queen, however, had done her best to repress these outbursts of feeling. She had even attempted to negotiate in the way of friendly intercourse with the papal powers; and there is perhaps no stronger proof of the severe discipline through which she had been compelled to pass, than these and other similar acts of thoughtful calculation and forbearance under the pressure of circumstances which at one time of her life would have fired her impetuous nature into indignant opposition.

As already said, the political history of this period could find no fitting place nor appropriate treatment here. It is, besides, too well known to demand more than a cursory notice with regard to those rapidly transpiring events in which Jeanne d'Albret was called upon to act and suffer. There was one awful crisis now approaching, in the deep shadow of which the whole nation seemed to lie trembling with a sort of undefined but fearful apprehension. A grand convocation was to be held at Orleans, and the princes of the royal blood were there to meet their sovereign; for what precise purpose none seemed exactly to

understand. Antoine and his brother Condé of course were summoned. The latter, though so recently liberated, had been again accused, and was now to answer on fresh charges for his part in the conspiracy of Amboise.

Strange to say, at this terrible juncture, when life and death were hanging in the scales, Antoine was resolved to go. This time the arguments and persuasions of his wife were all in an opposite direction. There could be nothing to gain now: rather, everything to lose. With regard to Condé especially, the summons appeared to Jeanne as certain to issue in absolute ruin. Indeed, she had but too much reason to apprehend the worst. Warnings from quarters alike influential and above suspicion were received again and again, as well as private hints of the most alarming nature. Fearing most for Condé, as being most implicated, Jeanne at last implored that he at least might be left with her. But all her entreaties were fruitless. Both princes were determined not to incur the charge of pusillanimity by refusing to appear; Condé in all probability regarding his honour as at stake, and Antoine perhaps secretly encouraged by a strong partiality lately shown him by Catherine de Medici, whose hidden purposes it was considered possible that he might serve.

Seldom has the hand of God in its irresistible and overruling power been more strikingly manifested than in the unexpected conclusion to which this great convocation was brought. The king, with his beautiful young queen, Mary Stuart—the mysterious but splendid Catherine—the Guises with their pomp and

power—all of majesty and magnificence connected with the then ruling monarch was drawn together to lend a greater amount of distinction to those who were to sit in judgment upon the hated heretics, and to form measures for ridding the country of their presence by any means which the audacity of the Guise faction might suggest. The young king, already half maddened by their dark and unceasing importunities, was ready for any step, however violent or extreme. It is said that his weak brain had been so excited by disease and other irritating influences, that he even fell in with a base and murderous project of theirs for putting an end to the fruitless life of the unfortunate king of Navarre with his own hand. Of this Antoine was warned, and yet shrank not from the appointed interview; for, to do him justice, he was always *personally* brave, whatever he might be when moral courage was required.

But the crowning purpose of this fatal gathering had nearly reached its consummation, when Condé was arraigned and condemned to be beheaded—the day, the hour, the place of execution fixed—so that the spectators from the royal windows might behold their final triumph. All things thus far, with the exception of Antoine's death, had progressed as the potent ministers of doom had wished and planned; when, suddenly, a hand mightier than theirs struck the young sovereign with that fatal malady which, in a few days, terminated his unhappy life; and with that overthrow fell the whole fabric which had appeared to be advancing so rapidly towards completion.

Underneath all, not for, but against the Guises,

that serpent-woman, Catherine, had been at work with a different structure of her own. In her tortuous policy she had selected as her tool and agent the luckless king of Navarre. For the better securing of Antoine, as her ally, she had kept in abeyance the death-blow for which it seemed at one time that his brother had but a few hours to wait. Thus was Condé saved by the sudden death of the king, and the change of parties which as suddenly ensued; while Antoine, like a poor fly entangled in the spider's web, was already being drawn within that treacherous thraldom from which he was never more to escape.

The temptations now placed before the king of Navarre must have been powerful in the extreme to a nature constituted like his. Catherine was not going to be a second time baffled by the house of Guise. Her next son, successor to the throne, was but ten years old. A long regency would ensue; and to be associated in the government with a weak tool like Antoine, was but, in other words, to hold the reins of government herself. So thought Catherine. The first thing she did, then, was to bring her pliant victim over to resign the regency to her—an object easily accomplished by the promise of an amount of power over the army and other departments, which looked, according to her representations, both dignified and alluring. Most readily then, and with little reserve, Antoine fell into the snare. How would it have been possible for him to resist, when once having surrendered himself to such a directress and guide?

It is melancholy to think how different might have

been the fate of this man and of France, had he listened only to the counsels of his faithful and high-minded wife. Yes—faithful; for even under trials the bitterest and most humiliating that women are ever called to endure, the queen of Navarre retained her womanly faith and feeling towards Antoine as her husband. This he knew, and sometimes would appear to be deeply sensible of the inestimable treasure he possessed in his wife. As, for instance, when warned of the murderous design to which the late king had been instigated, it is related of him that he stationed a faithful servant of his to be in readiness, "desiring him, in case of his assassination, to carry the shirt stained with his blood to his consort. 'Brave Renty,' he said, 'the queen will avenge my death. Let her send the fragments of this shirt to every court in Europe, that all the sovereigns may read in my blood how they ought to avenge the assassination of a king.'"*

There were many circumstances at this time combining to render the presence of the queen of Navarre in Paris not only politic, but almost indispensable. Reports must have reached her highly calculated tc rouse the indignant feelings of a wife, even more than those of a queen. Catherine was urgent in her invitations—almost too much so; for her expressions of sympathy and affection were such as to awaken suspicion of some design, which, however, was far from being adverse to the sovereigns of Navarre at this particular stage of her intrigues. Jeanne consequently determined to see for herself what was going on at the

* Life of Jeanne d'Albret.

French court; and, taking both her children with her, she undertook that melancholy journey to Paris, which was destined to overthrow the last foundation of her confidence in any overture or any promise emanating from that false and unprincipled court.

Previous to her going, Jeanne had been urged forward by an expected conference on the subject of religion, about to take place, at which the sovereigns of Navarre, as the representatives and leaders of reform, were expected to be present. Catherine was at this time throwing the weight of her favour on this side of the question, her disposition towards conversion manifesting itself in open mockery of the rites and customs of the Romish Church. Antoine, though considered as being wholly in her power, had lately shown himself not altogether manageable under her guidance for this reason, that on the side of the powerful abettors of the Guise party, there were influences at work which threatened to draw him over from the Protestant interests altogether. Jeanne was therefore wanted to keep her husband steady to the objects which Catherine had in hand; these requiring, above all other things, that her own power should be predominant.

The queen of Navarre was consequently received with every appearance of friendship and good-will. In her legitimate place of honour, she took part in the conference held at Poissy between Theodore de Bèze, on the Protestant side, and the Cardinal de Lorraine on the other; and, after much plausible arguing on the part of these dignitaries, she even made a speech herself, for Jeanne could speak eloquently and

well on any subject in which her heart was concerned, and her judgment clearly convinced.

For a short time the queen of Navarre maintained this honoured place at the court, conducting herself with all that guarded prudence which her circumstances rendered so peculiarly necessary. But soon the horizon began to darken with clouds which had scarcely been apprehended by the cunning Catherine herself. Under her entire sanction, Antoine had been associated with her in the highest position of power to which by birth he was entitled. But, never satisfied or at rest, he had begun to listen to other advisers, who persuaded him that there were higher honours yet to be attained by abjuring that faith of which he had hitherto been considered one of the most powerful supporters. Even Jeanne was not utterly despaired of in the project now on foot; and the Cardinal Ferrara undertook the delicate task of reasoning with, and if possible converting her. He must have little understood the character of the woman with whom he had to deal. Jeanne had learned the wisdom of listening with patience while keeping her own counsel; and she listened now to every bribe as well as every argument that could be suggested by Italian art. A powerful and closely compacted party had recently been formed by Guise, Ferrara, and an agent of Philip of Spain; and it was against these that Catherine was endeavouring to play off the king of Navarre at the head of his Protestant allies. If the queen could be induced to yield, the junto knew there would be little to apprehend on the part of her consort. But while the queen listened with what show of patience she

could command, she conceded no single point, still continuing her attendance upon Protestant worship, which Catherine, for purposes of her own, had gone so far as to permit within the precincts of the palace.

Failing in this quarter, the junto conceived the most diabolical designs, sometimes, it is asserted, aiming at the very life of the queen of Navarre. Indeed, it appeared to them absolutely necessary that Jeanne should be got rid of, in some way or other. She was far too clear-sighted and too high principled, to be cajoled by any mode of persuasion which it was in their power to use. One other method only now remained. Her existence must be ignored altogether. Already the arts of Catherine had but too far succeeded in winning the weak Antoine from his allegiance as a husband. The tie of affection was already more than half broken. Jeanne knew this, but had been silent. The tie of honour remained; but what was that, with the Pope's nuncio whispering to Antoine, that even his marriage could be set aside, and another, perhaps more attractive alliance, formed with the beautiful Mary Stuart, recently a widow?

Instead of dwelling longer upon these odious transactions, it is only necessary to say, that Antoine yielded to the full extent in all that was required of him; though sometimes awaking from his delusion on a sudden, to enquire how certain impossible proposals *could* ever be verified. An answer was always ready. In fact, his foolish and unprincipled part was no better than that of the puppet, moved by unseen hands; only that to his natural weakness was now added a system of cruelty towards his faithful but deeply injured wife, of

which no one at one time would have believed him capable.

Thus it not unfrequently is with those who are naturally weak; and because they are weak, are pronounced amiable. Strange misapplication of that word—so strange as to have brought it into absolute contempt; for look where we will around upon human life and character, it is the weak and little-minded who, when called upon for action, are always the most perverse; and when called upon for what is good, are most liable to be influenced by what is mean and selfish. Hence, too often they are absolutely cruel, not because they love cruelty, but because, under the pressure of circumstances, they know no great or high principle by which they might be kept from doing what is injurious to the rights or the happiness of others.

The king of Navarre was naturally a man of hasty and irritable temper, and might not always like his position of inferiority to his noble and clear-sighted wife. Perhaps secretly dissatisfied with himself, and painfully conscious of the wrong he was committing, his whole character appears from this time to have become altered for the worse. Captious in his moods, and often tyrannical in his requirements, he had no sooner avowed himself in religion on the side of Rome, than he not only insisted upon his wife relinquishing her association with the Protestant party, but would even have compelled her to attend mass with him. This Jeanne refused in a manner which admitted of no further interference, though it is said that he would even have used violence to enforce his commands.

Piqued at this open opposition to his will, the king,

in a fit of indignation, revealed for the first time to his wife the whole extent of his treachery and falsehood towards her; concealing nothing of his future plans, which involved an entire and final dissolution of their once affectionate union. Jeanne burst into tears. What else could she do? It was not that her husband had the power of which he boasted, but that he should have the *will*, which wrung those bitter tears from her indignant soul. Jeanne recovered herself by calling to mind her queenly dignity, and thus she was able to speak with courage and self-possession of the manner in which, even if forsaken and alone, she would yet defend the kingdom committed to her sovereign care. She then spoke of her children, distinctly showing her husband how the step he was proposing to take would injure them even more than herself. Upon which she closed the interview, without yielding any single point to those bitter and malignant enemies who were waiting impatiently to hear how Antoine had succeeded in what would probably afford them cruel entertainment as nothing more than a domestic quarrel.

From this time the queen of Navarre became an object of contempt as well as hatred at the French court. Catherine, having lost her influence over the husband, cared little to conciliate the wife. Besides which, the power she had so long coveted was at present in such adverse hands, that both queens were subjected to the most insulting treatment. Jeanne consequently withdrew from court. She wanted only her children once more by her side, and then to escape to her own beloved and faithful people. Her little daughter was permitted to be with her, but her son

was detained by his father; and now it was that Jeanne began to suspect the peril to which her liberty, if not actually her life, must be exposed, unless she could succeed in effecting her escape.

In fact, a dark plot was already formed for seizing and condemning the queen of Navarre to what would have been hopeless imprisonment; but on account of the disorders already disturbing the peace of Paris, it was deemed most prudent for the capture of the unprotected queen to take place on the journey on which she was thus permitted to set out for the south. By a strange coincidence of events—some say, by the protecting care of Condé, whose popularity amongst the Huguenot forces could ensure the accomplishment of any plan within the range of their power, Jeanne escaped this crisis of her danger; but, to render her situation still more perilous, she was attacked with serious illness by the way, a very natural consequence of the conflict of mind through which she must have passed. Her steps were followed and beset by a formidable army, under a commander whose vindictive threats and well-known brutal character left little hope of mercy should the queen ever fall into his power. On one occasion, happily near the borders of her own territory, when hearing that this force was at hand, Jeanne had to rise from a bed of sickness, and taking horse, with a few determined followers, was just able to cross the frontier of Béarn with her enemy close upon her steps.

The welcome which there awaited the queen of Navarre was such as might have repaid her for many sorrows; but not for those of the heart, under which she

was most severely suffering. Before effecting her escape from Paris, she must have had but little thought to spare from the immediate difficulties which beset her path, and the complicated snares by which she was surrounded. Now there was time to think, with much to remind her of the past, and of the fair promise of her early life; much to remind her, too, of that husband, whose gallant bearing, fair speech, and captivating manners, first charmed her fancy, and inspired the flattering hope, that associated with that handsome and attractive form there must naturally be corresponding elements of character, upon which a fair prospect of happiness might be built. What was her situation now? What hope was left for her of any human help or consolation on this side the grave?

What was a woman and a sovereign under such circumstances to do? Was she now to sit down and weep; to look out from her castle of Pau upon those vine-clad hills, those fertile valleys, and those mountains wrapped in floods of light; or to listen musing to the rush of the old river which had murmured to the laughter of her once joyous life? Jeanne d'Albret had claims upon her attention widely different from any which belonged to a womanly yearning over departed love and joy. Indeed, it was better for her, as well as wiser, to be up and doing. There was work enough before her; and with something of the desperation of one whose heart has been severed by a sudden and terrible wrench from its last hold upon earthly affection, she roused herself from what might have been the stupor of despair, to form and execute those decisive measures which, above all others that she had

yet put in execution, were marked by a severity and promptness of decision scarcely justified by Christian charity, and scarcely prudent in one so persecuted, and so destitute of human sympathy and support. All that was courageous, all that was valiant in her nature, now rose into action, with the exigencies of the times. Jeanne had not embraced the Protestant faith merely as a looker-on. As this contest between the two parties gathered force, assuming a warlike attitude throughout almost the whole of France, it became more imperative upon all possessing authority that they should not remain neutral or even indifferent. The gallant Condé was already in possession of Orleans with an armed force. Elizabeth of England had promised succours. There was hope in the horizon if Jeanne could only forget her own position as a woman and a wife. Too well she knew the perils by which she was surrounded, and worse than all was the thought of her son amongst evil counsellors in France. Nothing daunted, however, even by this consideration, she met her difficulties with the firmness of a true heroine; and with that rare quality which belongs only to heroism of the highest grade, she provided for them even before they came.

The first work which Jeanne undertook when, alone and deserted, she resumed the reins of government, was to institute an extended system of defence against the often projected invasions from Spain. Endowed by nature with extraordinary talents for arranging as well as commanding, she was scarcely surpassed by our English queen in the multiplicity of her resources, and the wonderful foresight with which she could look,

as it were, on every side at once, and provide against every possible emergency. Like Elizabeth, too, the fear of man appeared never to come between her and the ends which she determined to carry out. Less than ever was she influenced by fear at this, the most unsupported stage of her political operations.

Besides the defences which she constructed, and the armies which she raised and organized for the protection of her realm, Jeanne rushed upon the boldest measure which any European sovereign would at that time have ventured to carry out. Even her friends of the Protestant persuasion were startled when they heard that she was bent upon the discontinuance of the Romish worship in her dominions altogether. It was not in keeping with the character of Jeanne to rest satisfied only with being a Protestant herself. Perhaps she had now seen enough and suffered enough to make her hate the Romish party, and all their mysterious devices, especially as they had so recently insulted, wounded, and injured her so deeply on that point which a woman is most capable of feeling. How could she tolerate the religion of that party which by their boasted treachery had made her worse than a widow—would have wrenched her kingdom from her hands, nor scrupled to reduce both her and hers to the most absolute and irremediable ruin?

Jeanne was but little prepared to endure the existence of this worship near her own person or her throne. She was yet a queen, surrounded by faithful and valiant troops, who gloried in the princely banners of Navarre and Béarn, under which they were prepared to fight, and many of them to die, rather than relinquish that

liberty of conscience for which some of the bravest warriors of France were already contending against the armies of Guise and of Rome.

Unable to prevail over the clear-sighted and magnanimous queen by open means, secret emissaries were sent, accredited by her husband, to corrupt and stir up her people to revolt. These were apprehended on the borders of her kingdom, and imprisoned. Each added instance of treachery and wrong—and there were many in which Antoine acted as the tool of a malignant party—only proved more clearly how entirely he was alienated from all affection and honourable allegiance to his wife. Yet it is remarkable, and ought to be recorded of Jeanne as a woman, that even after this last outrage,—for the agent who was arrested was discovered to have been empowered to work the complete overthrow of Jeanne's sovereign authority,—it is remarkable that even after this discovery, she remonstrated earnestly and feelingly against the prejudice of the Huguenot preachers in striking out the name of Antoine from their public prayers. No insult, no act of retaliation, would she willingly permit towards him. If he would not honour himself, she would still treat him with honour; and it was her good pleasure that he should be prayed for. In this, however, she found it impossible to enforce compliance on the part of some of the most influential heads of the Protestant party; especially in the case of Theodore de Bèze, whose uncompliant nature offered many obstacles to Jeanne in the course she was anxious to pursue.

But an event was now drawing near which must

have deeply affected the mind of one so faithful in all her attachments as the queen of Navarre. Fighting bravely at the siege of Rouen, though against the party to which he had once so willingly pledged himself, poor Antoine received his death-wound; and in the following month, November 1562, his pitiful career was terminated by death. The closing scenes of his life were rendered still more melancholy by the attempts of those who surrounded him to beguile him of his sufferings by every frivolous amusement which could be devised. Instead of his once honoured and devoted wife, a frail beauty sat beside his couch, while music and dancing in the very chamber where he lay drove away the repose which his wounded and agonized condition so much required. Tiring, in all probability, of the anguish which they could not alleviate, his light companions fled at last from that atmosphere laden with death, and he was left to the sole care of a minister of religion, to whom he declared himself still attached to the Protestant faith, closing his lips with the expression that he died a Christian.

Little triumph indeed could have accrued to either party from Antoine's profession of attachment. But there is something peculiarly touching in his forsaken death and neglected burial—in his misery when he might have been so happy—in his worthlessness, when he might have been so influential in supporting the worth of others—especially in the utter helplessness of his feeble nature under the treacherous and cruel hands into which he had fallen, when he might have been so strong in the wisdom of one brave and faithful friend, who would neither have forsaken him, nor suffered his

glory to be tarnished. With the very pity which the consideration of one so constituted and so circumstanced awakens, there arises a feeling of forgiveness beyond what is generally bestowed upon characters thus wanting in all noble firmness and principle.

The queen of Navarre could not have reached her husband in his last illness, even if she had been informed of it in time. It is said that in his half-delirium he often wondered why his wife did not come near to comfort and support him. The extent of country which stretched between them was so beset with armed troops, that to effect a passage would have been impossible. It is said also of Jeanne, that she deeply mourned her loss. That she mourned, there is no doubt, repairing, for the usual term of retirement, to one of her favourite castles. Nor is it possible to suppose that her feelings would not be touched by the most poignant regret that she was not near her unfortunate husband in his last moments, to soothe his sufferings, and to whisper in his ear those words of hope and consolation, which at such a time might possibly have reached his heart.

All her past life must have come before the queen in these her silent hours, with much, perhaps, that she could have wished otherwise. If she had less to live for now, she had also less to fear; and with that she had more freedom to act as her conscience might direct. From this time her son became, if possible, more the object of her intense and concentrated interest. He was still detained at the French court; and not long after his father's death, Jeanne heard tidings of an illness from which he had suffered,

while she had never been made acquainted with his danger until the crisis was past. Wounded, as indeed she had a right to be, by this intentional neglect, Jeanne remonstrated so warmly, that Catherine was offended, and refused peremptorily to let the young prince join his mother. Jeanne, unable to rest satisfied while he remained in any way connected with the court, especially now that he was deprived of the protection of his father, used every private means of influence which lay within her reach, and at last so far succeeded, that, by the interest of her friends, he was removed from all personal intercourse with Catherine, and the party to which she had at last allied herself, and placed under the care of a Protestant lady of rank, who had long been Jeanne's personal and intimate friend.

In this manner the queen of Navarre was set free from all domestic claims, to prosecute those purposes of political administration, which for so long a period necessarily occupied her constant attention. Her daughter remained always under her charge, but towards her son she was not permitted to discharge the sacred duties of a parent, nor to receive in return that reciprocal affection which might now have been so great a solace. Indeed, the womanly nature of Jeanne d'Albret becomes from this time so merged in that of the queen and the patriot, the protectress of her people and the defender of their faith, that we almost lose sight of those minor traits of heart and feeling, with those familiar acts and expressions which give zest to biography, and especially to that of women. Once or twice on these minor occasions, there gleam forth the same brightness of intellect, and the same

sharpness of repartee for which Jeanne was so remarkable; with that indignant scorn of what was deceptive and contemptible, which she was not always solicitous to conceal.

On one occasion especially, her contempt must have been difficult to restrain within the bounds of courtesy. Jeanne had but just reached the age of thirty-four, when she became a widow. Her old and bitter enemy, Philip of Spain, who had been her most implacable tormentor through the whole of her life, now thought well to send an ambassador to the little court at Pau, with offers of conciliation, proposing, as a compensation for unjustly retaining possession of a large portion of her kingdom, that she should accept in marriage the hand of his son Don Carlos, a mere boy, of ungovernable temper, and reported to be mad; or, if it pleased her better, that of Don John of Austria, the illegitimate son of his father.

Jeanne appears to have listened to these proposals with becoming gravity and decorum, until wearied out at last by the obtrusive importunity of the envoy, who dared to introduce into these overtures occasional animadversions upon the edicts lately issued by the queen for the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, the destruction of Roman Catholic images, and even the burning of the holy wafer in the episcopal church of Lescar, during which transaction the spies of Philip had reported that Jeanne herself was present.

With unmitigated awe the Spaniard alluded to this fact; but as regarded the queen's presence, and implied approbation, he expressed himself with a degree of insolent authority which touched her feelings as a

Protestant, and her dignity as a sovereign. She replied therefore, with her natural quickness and energy, "What you deem a sacrament, Monseigneur, is an idolatrous fraud, which has caused the everlasting perdition of countless souls! I saw myself the wafer belonging to the church of Lescar, which was made only of flour and water, kneaded together with a crucifix, it being old and green as the colour of grass. And you assert that God is incarnate there!"*

The envoy could bear no more. He requested his dismissal, which the queen most willingly granted, though not without a genuine outburst of that fiery eloquence with which she sometimes astonished those hearers who had first witnessed the dignified and calm demeanour to which she had so severely schooled her naturally ardent and impulsive feelings.

It cannot be denied that the queen had proceeded to great and daring lengths in carrying out her purpose with regard to the discontinuance of Roman Catholic worship in those churches of Béarn where the majority of the people were Protestant. Where the numbers were about equal, she had so ordered that the church should be alternately at the service of each party. The very language of her edicts relating to these matters, bears considerable resemblance to those of Henry VIII. of England; but, unlike him, the queen of Navarre was scrupulous to appropriate the revenues arising from such confiscated property exclusively to the endowment of colleges, and other institutions for the benefit of her people; in no instance applying any portion of them to her own use.

* Life of Jeanne d'Albret.

It is needless to say what offence was given to some of the reigning powers by these unsparing measures, so daringly carried out too, with a hostile army hovering on the borders of her kingdom; with her enemy of Spain still more exasperated than before; with the papal menace ready to be hurled against her throne; with secret agents instigating her people to disloyalty; and more than all, with her son still held as a kind of hostage within the grasp of France. Truly, Jeanne had not suffered in vain, if firmness in purpose and bravery in action are to be looked for as the result of the heart being cruelly severed from every earthly tie.

There is no more frequent comment upon human life and conduct, than that of persons being especially constituted for what they have to bear. Never perhaps has this been more strikingly illustrated than in the character and experience of Jeanne d'Albret. There is, however, another provision in the arrangements of Providence, not always so distinctly recognized. The difficulties, the trials, and not unfrequently the losses, by which a person is set free to act out some particular part, or to carry on some particular work, which could not have been so effectually accomplished had those ties of affection or those claims of personal regard remained unbroken, the severance of which is regarded at the time as the greatest of calamities—these are the circumstances to which may often be attributed, not only the greatest liberty of action, but the greatest power.

Stern as the doom must be to a woman to be thus set free, there is little doubt but that those events which we now look back upon as the grandest exhibi-

tions of female heroism, have owed their existence, in no small measure, to the desolateness of hearts unclaimed by natural or relative affection. We do not love such women at the time of our association with them so much as others—hence their misfortune. We rather stand aloof, regarding them as we should the solitary rock in the great ocean, wondering at the granite majesty with which it resists alike the influences of sun and storm. We know nothing of the time before that great convulsion of the elements, when it was severed from its kindred hills; nor can recall the season of its verdure when it slept, perhaps a grassy knoll in a green valley, scarcely distinguishable amongst the stately cedars and the waving ferns. The solitary rock is more conspicuous now, more grand, perhaps more terrible; but who shall tell what beauty would have clothed its form—what gladness would have revelled at its feet—what glow of animated and luxuriant life would have warmed its rugged sides, filling the echo of its caves with joy, had that cold sea never rolled between it and the parent continent of which it originally formed a part.

The history of Jeanne d'Albret, from this period of her life, appears little less than miraculous to those who understand the female character only in its social and domestic relations. Her history, however, is so entirely blended with that of Protestantism in the southern provinces of France, that it would be impossible to pursue it further here, than by extremely slight allusions to some of the leading events by which it was most conspicuously marked. These in themselves constitute an experience sufficient to have filled

the life of a thousand ordinary women. Conspiracies against her liberty and life form no insignificant part of them. Once, on returning to her own dominions, the plot was so formidable, and in hands so powerful, that nothing but the extreme terror of one of the agents, overwhelmed with its enormity, prevented its final execution. It arose out of a conviction, on the part of Philip of Spain and his allies, that the time had come when heresy must be uprooted out of Christendom by any means, however desperate or vile; and that one distinguished victim, especially if of royal blood, arraigned before the Inquisition, would so appal the Protestant powers of Europe as completely to arrest the progress of reform throughout the Continent. The solitary and widowed queen of Navarre was fixed upon for this diabolical purpose; and had not the good feeling of Philip's lovely and amiable consort interposed, so as secretly to frustrate the design, Jeanne must inevitably have fallen into the power of her inexorable foes, and in all probability would thus have won a martyr's crown. On being made acquainted with the plot from which she had so narrowly escaped, this heroic woman only retired, with what force she deemed necessary, to one of her fortified towns, there to defend herself as best she might against the anticipated attack.

Again, when on another occasion her own people had revolted,—for the inhabitants of Lower Navarre, always more or less under Spanish influence, and always bitterly opposed to the Protestant religion, were never loyal to her government,—when some of the leaders amongst them had bound themselves, by

a compact written in their own blood, to destroy the power of this heretic queen, Jeanne, on being made acquainted with the fact, immediately had the conspirators seized, tried, and condemned to death; but afterwards, with that clemency which marked her treatment of every wrong or injury directed only against herself, granted them all a free pardon, unworthy as they afterwards proved themselves of such noble generosity.

The issue of that edict of excommunication against the queen of Navarre, which, in the year 1563, was affixed to all the churches and public buildings in Rome, appears not to have affected Jeanne so much as her relatives of the royal family of France. At their remonstrance this was partially withdrawn. But the papal anathemas had no terrors for Jeanne. Rather they would seem to have awakened afresh the energies of her indomitable spirit, which diffused its own influence through an extensive correspondence carried on by Jeanne with the Protestant sovereigns and divines of other countries. The letters of the queen of Navarre, on these subjects, written always with extraordinary clearness and force, were so highly valued, that many thousand copies were sometimes circulated in the Low Countries and other parts. This employment, in the extent to which it was maintained, must have occupied no small amount of time and attention, more especially as the subjects embraced were of the gravest moment, and were treated always with a depth of thought, and precision of language, which evince the clearest comprehension on the part of the writer.

Encouraged by the apparent friendliness of Catherine in espousing her cause against the Pope, Jeanne arranged a meeting with the royal family, while on a journey through the provinces, for the purpose, no doubt, of once more beholding and conversing with her son, though ostensibly to confer on matters connected with her kingdom. On this occasion the anxious mother had an opportunity of seeing for herself what she must have suspected, how little her boy was prospering, under the influence of Catherine, in all which she held most estimable. True, he had enjoyed the advantage of being instructed, in company with the royal princes, in the polite accomplishments most valued at that licentious court; but he was also acquiring a taste for much which his mother regarded as both dangerous and unsuitable to a Christian prince. In vain she pleaded with Catherine that he might be permitted to leave the court with her, even for awhile. No arguments could obtain from her this boon, for which, above all others, her heart was constantly craving. Once more she was under the necessity of leaving him behind, cheered only by his assurances that in whatever he might now be compelled to conform to the wishes of others, when once he should effect his escape, his mother should find him in all things obedient to her wishes.

A second time, however, Jeanne was more fortunate. Perhaps she proceeded more warily; for, without the knowledge of Catherine, she so managed as to obtain from Charles a promise that Henry should be set free to accompany his mother. Catherine, when acquainted with the fact, remonstrated warmly

with her son. But Jeanne had taken care to have the permission fully and clearly granted; and she urged, with her accustomed good sense, that it would be derogatory to the dignity of the king to violate or revoke his word.

Throughout the whole of her transactions with Catherine de Medici, it is curious to observe how often the sophistry and cunning of this false woman were effectually baffled, and her schemes unexpectedly frustrated, by the firm, truthful, and upright conduct of Jeanne. Nor is it difficult to imagine how Catherine must have hated such a competitor in the field of action; only that Jeanne appears never to have willingly offended, but rather to have evinced, in all her intercourse with Catherine, as much courtesy, and even submission, as her principles would allow. Even now, having gained this great purpose of her heart, she carefully avoided manifesting any triumph. She spoke with dignity and justice, when appealing to Charles in the presence of his mother, of the injury to his honour, should his word be tampered with; and the prince, pleased no doubt with the compliment to his importance thus ingenuously paid, refused to withdraw the permission he had granted. Catherine had no choice but to submit, and Jeanne departed towards Béarn in company with her son.

The great object of the queen of Navarre, after introducing Henry to her people as their future sovereign, was to redeem the time which had in some respects been worse than lost, by commencing his education afresh. He was now a handsome, brave, and gallant boy, skilled in all graceful exercises, and gifted

with a peculiar power of winning open hearts and willing hands to his service. The buoyant gaiety, the ready wit and merry laughter, with the hearty good-will of Henry, are spoken of to this day by the Basque people, with mingled love and exultation. Had this been all,—and if the prince had not been rescued from the allurements of the French court, it might have been all for which his character could be admired,—it certainly would little have deserved the appellation of *great*. But his mother was determined, so far as might yet be possible, to counteract the influences to which her son had been subjected, by a course of rigorous discipline, and application to those higher studies which had formed no part of Catherine's system of education. For this purpose Jeanne engaged for him, and also for her daughter, the best instructors in Greek and Latin, as well as men well qualified to initiate him in the doctrines and principles of the religion to which she herself so strictly adhered. To this discipline the queen added a rigid system of behaviour on the part of all the members of her court; so that there might have been some danger of a youth like Henry feeling this restraint a little monotonous and irksome, had not his mother devised the means of calling into exercise those buoyant energies for which the character of her son was so remarkable.

In fact, it was highly important that something beyond study should be found for the young prince to do. Jeanne understood the case, and she scrupled not to apply the remedy. It would have ill accorded with her own disposition to make her son effeminate, or even ascetic. Her own element was action; and,

believing him to inherit something of the same nature, she sent him forth with an armed force under an experienced commander, to quell a violent insurrection which had again broken out in one of her fortified towns. The consequence was, that the people, charmed with the bravery, the frankness, and the gallant bearing of the young prince, were easily brought over to swear allegiance to the royal authority, and he departed, it was said, amidst the most enthusiastic expressions of attachment and fidelity.

Henry's first experiment in arms was followed by others of a more responsible and arduous nature; until, as the disturbances of the country increased, and his presence became often necessary amongst the disaffected, he acquired a skill in arms beyond that of many an experienced soldier, even before the age at which young men in general are liberated from school. This branch of Henry's education was certainly not neglected, and it was one which the gravest advisers of that age, on looking round upon his circumstances, would have pronounced indispensable. It was one especially destined to render service in the cause to which his mother's wishes and prayers were most ardently devoted.

Another rising of the Huguenots was followed by another treacherous peace, signed in the year 1568. As usual, specious promises were held out to the queen of Navarre, who was especially invited to the French court; and, failing in her own ability to attend, she was requested to send her son. In order to obviate all suspicion with regard to these friendly overtures, Catherine artfully employed the services of

Fénelon, who made several journeys to Béarn as her express friend and ambassador, pressing the proposals of Catherine with an earnestness and sincerity which show how little he was acquainted with her real character. But Jeanne, who had learned some of the severest lessons of experience, was on her guard, and decidedly though respectfully refused to allow her son to quit her side. Henry had, in fact, become too valuable, not only to his mother, but to the Protestant cause. His popularity with the army, and the enthusiastic attachment with which he was regarded by the people, rendered his presence of the utmost importance; and on his life hung much that must have often filled his mother's heart with ardent hope, as well as profound anxiety.

It is said of Jeanne that about this time she became more reserved, more addicted to those moods of almost impenetrable abstraction; and no wonder. She knew too well that spies were around her watching all her actions, and that every word she uttered was liable to be reported to those who regarded her with malignant animosity. Her old enemy, the commander of the French army which always hung upon the outskirts of her kingdom, had now drawn nearer, and seemed to be guarding her every movement, though under the plea of friendly intercourse. Jeanne had no safety but in silence. Indeed, it was a part of her consistent system of behaviour never to give unnecessary offence, nor to make a show of opposition where she had no reasonable prospect of success. It is remarkable how few of her plans were ever frustrated, how seldom her measures were attended by defeat.

In this very important respect, the stamp of true greatness was set upon Jeanne's character, that she never resisted what was inevitable, nor wasted her strength in fretting against what she could not prevent. Another, and perhaps still more essential element of greatness, was her perfect simplicity,—her entire exemption from all false, or even questionable assumption. This feature of true dignity, as well as greatness, she was eminently successful in transmitting to her son, only that he subsequently came in contact with influences most fatally adverse to simplicity of any kind. Even at this period of his career, when most youths of Henry's age would have been ruined by the homage he received, as well as by the position of command to which he was so early promoted, we never find him taking credit for what did not belong to him; but on all occasions, frank and simple, yet thoroughly dignified in taking exactly the place for which he was fitted, and no more. On one occasion, when receiving a pompous and learned address, he answered that he had not so far completed his studies as to be able to reply in the same style, but hoped to give satisfaction by his conduct, as he knew better how to act than to speak. How the heart of the noble mother must have glowed with satisfaction when she observed these illustrations of the manliness and integrity of her son, always pre-eminent above the excitement of momentary gratification.

Wisely did Jeanne begin from this time to associate the prince with herself in her most secret counsels, showing her confidence in him in matters of the utmost urgency and importance. Circumstances of this

nature were pressing around her more and more heavily every day. Her position, in fact, was becoming very much like that of a captive, and she knew too well to what the secret plots of Catherine were tending, and that all France was waiting only for some propitious moment when, at her signal, the Huguenot leaders should be surprised and their whole force destroyed. Jeanne pondered deeply these projects in her own mind. She had much at stake, especially the royal heritage of her noble son. But on the other hand, there was the great Protestant cause, under whose banners were enlisted some of the noblest princes and most gallant chiefs who ever graced the ranks of chivalry,—Condé, Coligny, and soon perhaps her own brave Henry.

Having deliberated as long as prudence would permit, and, barely leaving time for the execution of her plans, the queen of Navarre determined to escape. In fact, she had no other resource. The French army was creeping around her. Rebel subjects, deeply bribed, were ready for the signal of revolt. Jeanne had too precious a charge in her son to permit his personal safety to be further endangered. Whatever she did was always executed in the most prompt and efficient manner. Her plans were all secure, her followers true, her own presence of mind was never known to fail. She had carried on, until the time of her escape, a system of reciprocal civilities with the leader of the French army, who for some time had been so near as to admit of friendly visits being paid by his family, and the very day of her departure had been fixed upon for one of these visits. But for Jeanne there was other and far

different work in hand. With fifty faithful gentlemen-at-arms, commanded by the young prince, Jeanne on that day was travelling rapidly along the road towards Castel Jaloux, their place of rendezvous, having first, however, in the solemn hour of early morning, partaken of the Holy Communion with her children. Had the slightest suspicion of her movements been awakened, had even any small detachment of the French army been by chance upon the road, the queen, with all she held most dear on earth, must inevitably have fallen into the merciless hands of her enemies. But a good providence was over them, and they reached the first point of safety with only one alarm, arising from the appearance of an armed force, which proved, happily, to be a regiment of her own devoted soldiers.

The same almost miraculous preservation attended the whole of the queen's progress. The commander of the French army, on hearing with dismay and indignation that his promised victim had escaped, followed with such speed as to come close upon the heels of the little party, and on one occasion reached a town from which Jeanne had but just departed. The object of the queen was to reach La Rochelle, then the head-quarters of the Huguenots, to which place Condé had also but recently escaped in still greater peril of his life. By the time the royal party from Béarn had reached the neighbourhood, their escort had increased to a powerful army. Condé, with a fitting equipment, went out to meet them, to conduct the queen with all her retinue into the town of Rochelle. Great and imposing was the array of Huguenot nobles, all ready to tender their allegiance to the queen of Navarre; and

joyful, yet solemn, must have been the exultation on both sides at this happy and well-timed meeting.

It is not easy to imagine a meeting in which there could be deeper interests involved. Ladies of rank with their children and families had fled to Rochelle for safety. Ministers of religion, and marked men of every grade, had taken refuge there, under the valiant leaders of the Huguenot party. The wife of Condé, with her infant children, had been his companions in flight, and by his side rode his gallant son, cousin to the prince of Béarn, and like him in years. As the queen passed along amid the acclamations of the people, there must have been tears, as well as cries of exultation, for all had their religion to defend and suffer for, as well as kindred, home, and liberty; and if it was joy that gave the impulse to this glorious welcome, there must have been deeper feelings well calculated to impart a degree of force and grandeur to the occasion.

Indeed, there is much of Roman dignity in the whole conduct and circumstances of Queen Jeanne at this time. She was eloquent, and she sometimes addressed the assembled warriors with that inspiriting and full-toned language which she knew so well how to employ. She had materials for the keenest satire and the most burning indignation in the wrongs which she had herself endured, in the stratagems, the broken faith, the false and persecuting policy, to which for years they had all been subjected; and she scrupled not to add to these the deeper pathos of a wife and a mother, treacherously cheated of her husband's faith, and now compelled to fly with her children as her last resource for their preservation from inevitable ruin.

Her kingdom for the time was sacrificed, but might it not be regained? In fact, what was there of good or great that might not be accomplished by the union of those honoured princes, and those noble warriors, under the banners of a righteous and sacred cause? It was one of the queen's favourite expressions that "to the valiant heart nothing is impossible."

The influence of the queen of Navarre derived considerable weight from the favourable impression produced by the appearance and manners of the young prince. Seldom separated on any public occasion from her side, he was at once her tenderest charge, and her protector,—a living witness of the deep pledge by which his mother had bound herself to the general interest; while his own bravery in the field, as well as his chivalrous and gallant bearing in the court, rendered him an object of universal admiration and attachment. Well might Jeanne exclaim when yielding him so young to all the dangers and the exigencies of war,—"I have a work to perform, and I must steel my heart to its demands."

In her peculiar position, with regard to the Huguenot army, Jeanne found employment for her extraordinary powers of provisional resource while contriving and superintending the financial supplies. No small portion of her time was spent in corresponding and negotiating with the different courts of Europe. The queen of England was solicited, and readily granted supplies of men and money. Jeanne's own jewels were thrown into the treasury. Every means that could be devised was promptly and skilfully applied,—every treasure that could be made available was willingly

devoted to the service of the army, now increased to such an amount as to tax severely the efforts required in raising the necessary supplies. Nor was this all the duty which devolved upon the queen. She was not satisfied with planning and arranging. In her own person she might be seen at every post of pressing duty, superintending the necessary works which had to be carried on in the absence of the army, and providing with the utmost prudence and forethought alike for success and defeat.

But the high moral standard which regulated all the decisions of the queen was even more remarkable in that age of laxity and falsehood than her extraordinary abilities for arrangement and command. It was this, no doubt, which constituted the great secret of her influence over others, that with a Spartan heroism she knew how to withhold all private feeling from interference with the supreme good of the community which she believed herself called to serve.

Never was this noble feature of Jeanne's character more strikingly displayed than when, soon after her safe arrival at Rochelle, a grand assembly was held for the purpose of electing a commander of the Huguenot army. There were but two between whom the choice *could* be made,—Condé, and the young prince of Béarn. Jeanne appeared in state on the occasion, as usual, with the prince by her side. The assembly was solemn and expectant. Condé first rose, and with that sincerity which belonged to his noble nature, resigned the place which he had hitherto held to his nephew, the prince of Béarn, promising, in consideration to his youth, to be still the responsible bearer of the great

burden of the war. Jeanne listened with deep emotion to this high testimony of respect to herself and her son; but nothing could induce her to consent to such an arrangement as that Henry should stand, even nominally, at the head of the army, until years and experience should have given him the real qualifications for such a duty. Besides which, she honoured the brave Condé too much, and she wished that her son should feel this preference equally with herself. She therefore called upon him publicly to manifest his full and entire accordance with her wishes, saying that gratitude as well as policy demanded of him such a concession, and bidding him learn for the present how to obey, that he might better understand in the future how to command. On these and other great occasions Jeanne seems never to have miscalculated the heroism of her son. He responded with a spirit worthy of her own, and the noble enthusiasm of both filled the hearts of all who heard them with something of their own greatness.

The defeat of the Huguenots at the great battle of Jarnac, and the cruel death of Condé, was a blow which fell with such sudden and overwhelming weight upon the whole of the remaining force, as almost to threaten its total extinction as an army. In vain had Coligny endeavoured to rally his remaining troops. The lamentations of the soldiers on the loss of their beloved leader were such as to frustrate every endeavour to raise them again into a condition of even ordinary discipline. In vain the generals went from one quarter of the camp to another; all authority was at an end. Utter despair had seized the troops, as if nothing now was worth their

nghting for. It was evident that something must be done. A messenger was sent to entreat the queen of Navarre to visit the camp. Jeanne had set out for that purpose before the messenger arrived. She travelled in mourning state, with the two princes on either side of her, the young Condé unable to control his grief.

Next to their leader himself, no one had been so popular with Condé's soldiers as Queen Jeanne; and glad was the almost desponding Coligny, when he heard them, as she rode along with the young princes, bursting ever and anon into shouts of welcome; until at last the spirit of their former exploits came back, and with one universal thrill of joy the welcome ran from rank to rank, and all the martial ardour of that broken host was again formed into one united phalanx, ready to be led to victory or to death.

We turn to the pages of Jeanne's biography, where the writer states that "Cheers were also given for the princes of Béarn, who, clad in armour, and bearing the shield with the fleur-de-lis emblazoned, which became afterwards so renowned, seemed inspired with martial ardour to avenge the disastrous defeat. In Jeanne's train were Coligny, d'Andelot, la Rochefoucault, Fontrailles, de Piles, Rohan, Pontivy, several of the valiant Viscounts, Geulis, and others. The queen presently advanced, having Condé's son on her left, and the prince of Navarre on her right; and sustained by that high heart and lofty and resolute spirit, she spoke, as stated by De Thou, in the following words to the assembly:—

"'Children of God and of France,—Condé is no more! That prince who has so often set you the example of courage and of unstained honour, who was

always ready to combat for his king, his country, and his faith; who never took up arms except to defend himself from implacable enemies; that heroic prince, whom even his foes were constrained to reverence, has sacrificed his life for the noblest of causes! Instead of receiving from us the laurel crown, the just guerdon of his valour, his brows are now circled with the diadem of immortal glory. Condé has resigned his breath on the battle-field in the midst of his career of fame. . . . Soldiers, you weep! But does the memory of Condé demand nothing more than tears? Will you be satisfied with profitless regrets? No! Let us unite, and summon back our courage, to defend a cause which can never perish, and to avenge him who was its firmest support! Does despair overpower you? Despair! that shameful failing of weak natures; can it be known to you, noble warriors and Christian men? When I, the queen, hope still, is it for you to fear? Because Condé is dead, is all therefore lost? Does our cause cease to be just and holy? No! God, who placed arms in his hand for our defence, and who has already rescued you from perils innumerable, He has raised us up brothers-in-arms worthy to succeed him, and to fight for the cause of the king, our country, and the truth! Not only princes of royal lineage remain for our leaders, but Coligny, la Rochefoucault, la Noue, Rohan, de Piles, d'Andelot, Montgomery! To these brave warriors I add my son. Make proof of his valour! The blood of Bourbon and of Valois flows in his veins! He burns with holy ardour to avenge the death of the prince. Behold also Condé's son; now become my own child. He is the worthy inheritor of

his father's virtues. He succeeds to his name, and to his glory. Soldiers! I offer you everything in my power to bestow—my dominions, my treasures, my life, and that which is dearer to me than all, my children! I make here solemn oath before you all—and you know me too well to doubt my word—I swear to defend to my last sigh the holy cause which now unites us, which is that of honour and truth.'

"Profound silence succeeded Jeanne's harangue; then cheers resounded from every part of the field. The soldiers crowded round the queen, clamorously demanding to be led to the combat. During this scene of excitement, the young prince of Navarre mingled with the soldiers. Inspired with a sudden impulse, the army unanimously hailed him for its chief and leader in the room of Condé. Jeanne having signified her assent, the young Henry was saluted on the spot as generalissimo of the confederate forces. 'Soldiers,' exclaimed he, enthusiastically, 'your cause is mine,—our interests are identical. I swear to you on the salvation of my soul, and by my honour and life, never to abandon you!' Proclamation was made of the command henceforth to be exercised by the prince of Navarre, under the guidance of Coligny; and by the queen's direction, the young prince of Condé took the same oath as Henry to remain faithful to the cause."

During the time when all the noblest energies of the queen of Navarre were thus drawn upon from so many quarters, she was receiving the most distressing accounts of the disorders and devastations in her kingdom, which she had been compelled so suddenly to desert. The French army had cruelly retaliated upon

her subjects when left without a leader. The discontented barons, who had received their unmerited pardon from the queen herself, were now again in revolt. Falsehood, rapacity, and bloodshed were spreading terror amongst those who would have been faithful had they known in whom to trust. It was impossible for Jeanne to desert the post which she now occupied. She therefore appointed the Count de Montgomery commander over her armies in the south, giving him a commission of unlimited authority, and receiving in return his oath of fidelity, "to perish in her service, or to win back her dominions."

Severely and promptly was this commission executed, beyond what Jeanne herself had perhaps anticipated, yet scarcely beyond what the exigencies of the state appeared to require. Party feeling ran high on both sides, and desperate acts were perpetrated, though chiefly in the heat of battle. Everywhere the army of Montgomery proved victorious. The French were driven out of the province of Béarn, as if by a kind of fatality. The Spaniard disappeared from the frontier, and all was again reduced to order, in an almost incredibly short space of time.

But, whatever hopes might be inspired by the successes in the south were damped by a sudden victory gained over the Huguenots at the siege of Poitiers. The troops had been led by the Admiral Coligny, who received a desperate wound, and in this condition he found himself deserted both by officers and soldiers, who, again falling into discontent and despair, and recalling the memory of their beloved Condé, refused obedience, and threatened to fall back into a condition

of ungovernable misrule and disorder. But Coligny was not deserted, nor must the cause even now be lost for want of effort. The queen of Navarre again hastened to the camp, this time more distant, her journey lying through a country beset with dangers on every hand. She came, as the Admiral expressed it, "like an angel of light from heaven," she came with expressions of gratitude and affection towards himself; and by a demeanour which indicated the utmost confidence and esteem, she again infused fresh spirit into the officers and troops, rejoicing the heart of their commander, and spreading shame amongst those who would have been mean or cowardly enough to desert him.

On another occasion we find the queen in the midst of cannon-balls, and wounds, and death, encouraging one of her generals to have his arm amputated, after he had been assured that in such an operation lay his only chance of life. It was the brave and faithful La Noue, who *wanted his arm to fight with*, and would rather die than relinquish the defence of the queen. Jeanne, as usual, had been sent for. Who could reason, or who could plead like her? "Valiant La Noue!" she first exclaimed, while endeavouring to rouse that true and manly courage which consists sometimes in submitting, as well as conquering; and then, "Beloved La Noue," she added, when assuring him how dear his life would yet be to his friends and his country. At last the hero was vanquished. But the queen did not leave him so. With her own hands she supported the quivering limb during the operation, encouraging the sufferer all the while "with words of the sweetest consolation." In this manner it was that the queen bound

herself to the hearts of her followers by an attachment far surpassing that of ordinary loyalty.

It seems to have been all along the policy of the court of France not to enter into open warfare with that of Navarre. For reasons connected with the state of her own family,—some said because of the jealousy and constant opposition of her sons, whose animosity towards one another might have been ruin to herself, —Catherine was not long before she again changed the nature of her proceedings towards the Huguenots, whom it became once more her pleasure to conciliate. The consequence was another peace more fatally treacherous than any by which it had been preceded, and more horrible and blood-stained than even the open field of war.

Without entering farther into the details of this appalling picture of human depravity,—for the vile deceptions of that cruel court are even more sickening than the massacres to which its merciless designs were tending,—one fact is worthy of remark, as it farther illustrates the character of that noble-hearted woman whose accumulated sufferings were now rapidly advancing towards their climax. It was that the queen of Navarre, amongst all her friends and advisers, was the only person who never could be brought to believe in these friendly overtures. Coligny was soon cajoled away to join the court, where the specious promises and artful management of Catherine held him completely entangled in her toils—a sort of decoy-bird, whose credulity was made abundant use of in beguiling others into the same snare. From his readiness of belief and his persuasions, many of the brave leaders of the Hu-

guenot party were so far beguiled as to trust themselves within the power of their enemies, now wearing the garb of flattery and cordial friendship. But still the queen of Navarre stood aloof. The great object both with Catherine and Charles was to induce her to repair with her son to their court, where a splendid marriage awaited prince Henry with the beautiful Marguerite de Valois, sister to the king.

This marriage, approved by all the Huguenot party as the surest means of reconciliation, was more revolting to Jeanne than she knew how to endure; and her dislike to it was so manifest, and held out so long, that at last it brought upon her the charge of allowing her private feelings to interfere with those higher interests to which so much of her life had been devoted. This, from her friends, was peculiarly painful, especially when the blandishments of Catherine and her allies were so incessantly employed in convincing and persuading, that there needed strong reasons to set against their apparently advantageous and flattering proposals. Jeanne consulted with the leaders of her party, who pleaded earnestly for the marriage. She laid the matter as one of conscience before her chaplains and spiritual advisers, who all regarded her refusal in the same light. Always willing to yield her private interests when the general good was concerned, and always great in her concessions no less than in her resistance, Jeanne at last consented, but it was rather in the manner of one who, from a sense of duty, resigns every earthly hope under some adverse and inevitable doom.

For some time the health of the queen of Navarre had evinced symptoms of decline. Her life was in

action but from this period, the few intervals of rest which she was permitted to enjoy were marked by a lassitude of body and abstraction of mind, which betokened the premature failure of her almost superhuman energies. Never was this more manifest than after she had conceded to the entreaties of her friends what was more to her than life itself. With something like a presentiment of what was looming in the future, Jeanne prepared to set her house in order. For this purpose she paid a visit to her provinces in the south, resting in her castle at Pau, and from thence making journeys to every part of her dominions, where she lent a kind and gracious ear to all the grievances and petitions of her people, leaving none with cause to complain that their wrongs had not been redressed. One of her gravest occupations was the framing of a better code of laws for the government of the country. But chiefly her mission was one of mercy,—to liberate those who had been imprisoned, and to relax the severity which the commander of her armies had deemed it necessary to enforce.

In her private life, the occupations of the queen at this time were strictly in accordance with the resigned and serious tone of her own mind. Under her direction a translation of the New Testament into the Basque language had been commenced at Rochelle, while waiting the issue of the war. This was now completed by the ministers of the reformed faith, and distributed amongst her people. In the beautiful grounds adjoining her château, the queen indulged her more private feelings by superintending the erection of a kind of summer residence for her daughter, the princess Ca-

therine, whose studies were to be pursued in this tastefully ornamented structure, under the direction of her governess, a lady who enjoyed their unlimited confidence. Catherine was always the companion of her mother; and when pressed and harassed by accumulated anxieties, she was accustomed to speak of her daughter as being her greatest earthly consolation.

The princess Catherine was a lady of remarkable propriety of conduct, a Protestant, and devotedly attached to her mother. From the French court, Jeanne wrote to her son that nothing could be more lovely and attractive than his sister, when compared with those ladies of questionable manners who always followed in the train of Catherine de Medici. Regarding her son, Jeanne was but too well aware of the weak points of his character, especially his gaiety and love of pleasure, in which he so strikingly resembled his father; and it was this knowledge, combined with his faithful affection for herself, and with his other great and noble qualities, which rendered Henry at once her pride, and the source of her most poignant anxieties.

For this reason, and knowing too well what temptations awaited him at the court, Jeanne resisted all the endeavours of Catherine and Charles to draw him thither. She herself must go—that was inevitable, if the dreaded marriage was to proceed; but Henry must remain in safety while he could, and on no account, nor by any persuasion, be prevailed upon to follow her, until she should direct him when and how to do so Subsequent events confirmed the sagacious wisdom of the queen in enforcing these charges. It was, as she saw clearly, necessary for her to be present. So far

their point was gained, but the great object with Catherine was to bring the young prince within the toils which she was ingeniously spreading for his inexperience.

But for the prudence of the queen of Navarre, and that penetrating intellect, with which she was continually piercing through the devices of Catherine, the Huguenot leaders would have thrown themselves again and again into her snares. Jeanne understood better than the sagest warrior—perhaps it was natural that she should—what was meant by the blandishments of this vile woman, always brought into play for the most selfish, and often the basest, purposes. She understood them at least so far as never to believe in Catherine's sincerity, and to trust it least when her promises were most conciliating. Beyond this, it was scarcely possible for a mind so clear and upright as hers to penetrate—nor, indeed, for any mind.

"Can the queen, who never pardons, pardon me?" was Jeanne's expression to those who would fain have persuaded her to trust in Catherine. And in this spirit she entered upon the painful duties which lay before her, submitting her own judgment to that of others, and subduing, as best she could, her own strong feelings. Thus were the negotiations for the marriage begun by Jeanne herself, all the while under so deep a cloud, that her already failing health was sometimes scarcely sufficient to support her through the trials of the day.

Indeed, it was now a day of trial to Jeanne, altogether—rather a night of trial; for all was dark, revolting, hideous. When the queen arrived at the

court, then held at Blois, she was received by Charles with the frantic joy of a madman who has at last entrapped his victim. Sometimes, however, the humour of the king assumed an aspect of real regard; and perhaps, notwithstanding his alternate fits of insult and tyranny, he stood by her, after all, with more faith than the rest.

It would seem as if this last and bitterest trial had been appointed for the queen, as the mockery of fiendish faces is sometimes permitted to haunt the feverish dreams of the dying Christian. The heart revolts from tracing out the odious details of personal insult, deception, and cruelty, to which this high-minded woman was subjected, under the pretence of friendly and honourable negotiation. To break openly with the queen of Navarre was not the object of Catherine and her party. They were determined to complete the projected alliance, though knowing that the heart of Marguerite was pre-engaged, and that she held the project in the greatest abhorrence. Nor was Henry himself an impatient suitor for the favour of one whose beauty could not redeem her character from the stains it had contracted in that licentious court.

In these respects, as well as many others, the marriage was especially hateful to Jeanne. But still Coligny and all her Huguenot advisers persisted in their urgency, so that Jeanne had no choice but to comply; and while she did so, to be resolute in stipulating on her part for such conditions as would least infringe upon the scruples of a true Protestant. These, and the insulting prevarications with which all her proposals were treated, occupied many months, during

which, her health still failing, Jeanne wrote continually to her son the most earnest charges respecting his future conduct and government, often introducing into her letters those playful expressions and allusions which show how well she knew how to adapt herself to the disposition and habits of a youth like Henry.

Indeed, one of the most remarkable features in the character of this queen is the attention which she always found time to give to the feelings, as well as the requirements, of others. The services which she rendered to those who were in trouble, the letters she wrote, the advice she gave, the perseverance with which she interceded for her friends, were enough of themselves to have occupied what might not unjustly have been called a well-spent life. Even now, she took in hand an affair of great moment to a friend, but in no way connected with herself, writing letters full of tenderness to her, and others full of the most earnest persuasion to those with whom she had promised to intercede.

It was well for Jeanne that her thoughts *could* be thus diverted from her own affairs; for her position was but too well described in her letters to her son, as given at length by her biographer. With these words one of them commences:—"I am in travail, and in such extremity of suffering, that had I not foreseen all that has happened, I must have succumbed beneath the torment." Again:—"When I appeal to the queen as confirming what she has said, she denies the thing flatly, laughing in my face, and treating me in such shameful fashion, that you may believe my patience surpasses that of Griselda herself. . . . If you could

witness the distress and anxiety which I suffer, you would pity me, for they treat me with the greatest rigour, and with foolish discourse and ridicule, instead of negotiating as the gravity of the subject demands; so that I feel great difficulty in repressing my wrath. I have however resolved not to be irritated, and the patience which I demonstrate is miraculous. . . . I fear I shall soon fall ill with anxiety, as my health is failing rapidly."

Such was the frank, confiding manner in which the queen wrote to her son, bidding him still beware of false advisers, and on no account set out towards her until assured by herself that he might. Nor was Henry without need of these strict injunctions; for all the while he was receiving letters from Charles and others at the court, describing the pleasures which awaited him there, and the welcome with which they were longing to receive him. Henry, however, had thus far shown no symptom of disobedience to his mother; but with the most tender and devoted attachment, had relied upon her judgment and conformed to her wishes, as if perfectly conscious that in her faithful love, her high principle, and powerful intellect, he had a foundation of security beyond what he could elsewhere find in the whole world.

The spirit of Jeanne d'Albret was of a nature never to be wholly subdued, even by insult and cruelty combined. Catherine herself was baffled by that integrity of motive, and firmness of principle, which she found it impossible to subdue. The unflinching perseverance of Jeanne in demanding certain conditions connected with the Protestant faith, was beyond all previous cal-

culation on the part of those whose plan had been to evade and annoy, so as at last to compel submission. They had strangely misunderstood the grand and noble nature with which they had to do. There were points on which Jeanne would yield nothing. All that she did yield was under the advice of competent judges, to whom she had obtained leave to submit her cause. The mad king, too, greatly facilitated the conclusion of the matter by suddenly casting off, as he sometimes did, his mother's authority, and declaring that the marriage should take place, even without conditions; so that Jeanne was at once deprived of all plea either for opposition or delay.

On setting about to do any act, however repugnant to her own feelings, Jeanne always did it honourably and well. And now we find her, like a true mother, repairing to Paris, to make the necessary purchases and preparations for her son's establishment. It was on this occasion that she procured those articles from Catherine's favourite perfumer to which such importance was attached after her death, by those who suspected that it might have been hastened by poison.

Whatever the immediate instrumentality might be, —and there was clearly discovered to have been sufficient natural cause in the malady which had for some time preyed upon the queen's health,—it is impossible not to recognize a dispensation of mercy in the event by which her tried and suffering spirit was so soon released from all its earthly cares. Could Jeanne have opened her eyes to behold, only for one moment, the scenes which were to follow in those very streets which she was traversing for purposes of affection,

and objects of maternal care, she would have blessed the welcome agony which issued in her escape from so much grief and horror. All her past sufferings would at that moment have sunk into utter insignificance in comparison with that which was already preparing—preparing, but not for her.

A sudden attack of pulmonary disease, attended with unusual pain, arrested all further efforts on the part of Jeanne. Her daughter had previously been seized with alarming illness; and in attending upon her, the queen first experienced those monitions of her own speedy dissolution, which she accepted in a spirit at once resigned and grateful. Death came to her in an unusually painful form, occasioned by a large abscess on the lungs; and her sufferings were excruciating. But, as her biographer remarks, "though they drew tears from her attendants, they never extracted a murmur or complaint from her own lips. Her patience and resignation in this solemn moment seemed as a sublime example to those around, and afforded evidence of the self-denial of her past life."

The same writer states that "from the second day of her illness, the queen distinctly intimated her conviction of the hopelessness of her recovery. She desired that her chaplains might visit her for the better settlement of her conscience. 'I know,' exclaimed the dying queen, 'that the prayers of the righteous avail much. I submit myself to the holy will of God, taking all evils from Him, as inflicted by a loving Father. I have never feared death; still less dare I murmur at the dispensations of Providence, though He afflicts me with these most grievous pains. Never-

theless, I grieve deeply to leave the children whom God has given me, in their tender age, exposed to so many dangers and so much adversity: but in God's providence I confide.' Then addressing the attendants, who were weeping bitterly, she exclaimed, 'Ought you to weep for me? You have all witnessed the miserable wretchedness of my past life. Ought you to weep, when at length God takes pity upon me, and calls me to the enjoyment of a blessed existence, for which I have unceasingly prayed?'"

Even when it became evident that death was at hand, the mind of the queen still preserved all its powers; and she made a gesture to her chaplains to continue their intercessions on her behalf to God. A faint smile was observed to pass over her countenance, when one of them commenced the psalm, "*In te, Domine, speravi;*" and throughout the remaining hours of her existence she continued to sink gradually and peacefully to her rest.

It was observed by those who attended upon the queen, that she never, in this her last illness, alluded to the marriage of her son. Perhaps that heavy burden had even then been laid, where she laid all her other sorrows, at the feet of her Redeemer. She had remembered him, however, as well as others, with all care and forethought in her bequests; and with that, her earthly work was done. On the morning of June 9th, 1572, this heroic Christian breathed her last, her age at that time not exceeding forty-four years.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew was perpetrated on the 28th of August following.

VIII.

BRIEF NOTICES.

If there is really, as some persons assert, a certain kind of fascination in dwelling upon scenes of horror, it would have been scarcely out of place to prolong the painful interest always awakened by recalling the details of that great gathering of the Huguenot leaders in Paris, which followed almost immediately upon the death of Jeanne d'Albret, by turning our attention to one of our English nobility who was then present amidst the gayest scenes of that splendid city, little dreaming of the fatal, but still invisible pall, under which so many gallant hearts were just then beating, —so many lovely and brilliant forms passing gracefully and unconsciously on towards their doom.

Sir Philip Sidney, the flower of English chivalry, the statesman, soldier, scholar, and poet, was then in the commencement of his continental travels, enjoying his first view of the fashionable world of France. While sharing in all those festivities which were pursued with unwonted ardour, as a cloak to the hideous designs they were intended to conceal, he was weighing in his own mind, as was natural for one so highly

and variously gifted, the comparative attractions of all those different channels through which glory must have appeared to him so easy to attain; and with the ardour of unpractised youth, was drawing fast towards the conclusion that the soldier's life of resolute and constant action was that in which above all others he should prefer to seek distinction.

From the classic shades of his native Penshurst, he had come to tread that terrible arena, in which the noblest valour was so soon to sink in powerless conflict beneath the assassin's hand; and above most men fancy would paint Sir Philip Sidney at this period of his youth as bringing with him from his privileged and happy home all those associations which impart stability as well as grace to the highest type of English character. Would that it were possible to trace how in this accomplished scholar, warrior, and gentleman, maternal influence had contributed towards the formation of one of the most perfect and well-balanced characters which the world has ever known.

That such a character should have been rendered so complete, independently of female influence, is not easy to believe. That his mother, the daughter of John Dudley, Earl of Northumberland, "was by nature a woman of large and ingenious spirit," is, however, the chief substance of all that we are now permitted to know respecting her, and that in her society he passed the whole of his home-life up to his eighteenth year. His accomplished sister, too, "Pembroke's mother," must have had no small share in imparting at once a noble and a graceful turn to his

illustrious character. For her especial pleasure his *Arcadia* was written; and though as a poem it possesses little interest at the present day, yet as illustrating by his poetic talent one phase of his brilliant and distinguished life, it serves a similar purpose to that of the field-flowers in the landscape, by imparting a richness as well as delicacy to the general tone of the picture.

The honourable, upright, clear, and beautiful character of Sir Philip Sidney, situated as he then was, unconscious of wrong amidst the intrigues and the falsehood of that most treacherous court, and unharmed by the horrors which brooded around him, might not inaptly represent the character and condition of his own country as England stood at that time amidst the tumults which distracted the other nations of Europe. And it is with pleasure that we turn again to her peaceful shores to gather a few fragments from the records which time has left us of the influence which maternal wisdom and maternal love have exercised over some of her distinguished men.

Amongst these we are indebted to Bishop Hall's own testimony for that admirable description placed before us of his mother. After recording the date of his birth, which took place in Leicestershire, on the 1st of July, 1574, just two years later than the death of Jeanne d'Albret, he says: "My father was an officer under that truly honourable and religious Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, President of the North. . . . My mother, Winifrede, of the house of the Bainbridges, was a woman of that rare sanctity, that, were

it not for my interest in nature, I durst say that neither Monica, nor any other of those pious matrons anciently famous for devotion, need to disdain her admittance for comparison."*

The writer goes on to state that his mother was continually exercised with the "affliction of a weak body, and oft a wounded spirit." Like the holy Monica, she also had a dream which appears to have affected her mind with deep and lasting impressions. For a clearer explanation of this dream, however, she applied to an excellent divine under whose ministry she lived, and who so expounded its meaning, that from that time "she began to take heart, and by good counsel and her fervent prayers found the happy prediction verified to her; and upon all occasions, in the remainder of her life, was ready to magnify the mercy of God in so sensible a deliverance. What with the trial of both these hands of God (her mental and bodily afflictions), so had she profited in the school of Christ, that it was hard for any friend to come from her discourse no whit holier. How often have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass without a large task of private devotion, whence she would still come forth with a countenance of undissembled mortification? Never any lips have read to me such feeling lectures of piety; neither have I known any soul that more accurately practised them than her own. Temptations, desertions, and spiritual comforts, were her usual theme. Shortly, for I can hardly take off my

* Bishop Hall's account of himself prefixed to his Works.

pen from so exemplary a subject, her life and death were saint-like."

Such is the testimony of a son, respecting whom it is not unreasonable to believe that he derived from his mother much of that prayerful and devoted spirit by which his early experience was marked—much of the solemn dignity of his character as a man, as well as much of his influence in the Church to whose service his life was consecrated.

Still directing our attention, and now especially, to the peaceful scenes of quiet English life, we find another of those striking instances of maternal influence, recorded with the same earnest simplicity, and handed down to us almost from the same period of time.

About twenty years later than the birth of Bishop Hall, there awoke to life and all its highest capabilities, one of the sweetest singers of his Maker's praise who has ever touched the chords of hallowed feeling. George Herbert was born in the castle of Montgomery, on the 3rd of April, 1593. The family estate of the Herberts was never more honoured than in this event, although it had long been owned by men of wisdom, distinguished for their patriotism, as well as for their noble liberality.

The mother of George Herbert was Magdalen Newport (daughter of Sir Richard Newport), a woman of great wisdom and virtue, who in her widowed state brought up a numerous family with honour and dignity, herself the friend of learned and good men, and the liberal patroness of merit wherever it was in her power to protect or assist in any good cause.

In Isaac Walton's simple but graphic description of the family, he states that "George Herbert spent much of his childhood in a sweet content, under the eye and care of his prudent mother." His father died when he was only four years old, and from his mother he seems to have imbibed much of that amiable and pious tendency of character by which he was afterwards distinguished, and which rendered him remarkable, while never otherwise than courteous and conciliating when mixing with other young men in those studies in which he so eminently excelled. At the age of fifteen he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. The mother who had watched so carefully over his childhood did not neglect his safety here, but committed him to the oversight of Dr. Nevil, Dean of Canterbury, who gladly undertook the charge, knowing the excellencies of the mother, and highly valuing this proof of her confidence and esteem.

The true honour of her sons seems to have been the great object of this excellent woman. For the sake of her oldest boy, she left their hereditary home, and took up her abode near to him while pursuing his studies at Oxford. "She continued with him there," says the same quaint biographer, "and still kept him in a moderate awe of herself, and so much under her own eye, as to see and converse with him daily; but she managed this power over him without any such rigid sourness, as might make her company a torment to her child, but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth, as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in the company of his dear and careful mother; which was to

her a great content; for she would often say, 'that as our bodies do take a nourishment suitable to the meat on which we feed; so our souls do as insensibly take in vice by the example and conversation of wicked company.' And she would therefore often say, 'that ignorance of vice was the best preservation of virtue, and that the very knowledge of wickedness was as tinder to enflame and kindle sin, and to keep it burning.' For these reasons she endeared her children to her company, continuing with the oldest son in Oxford four years, in which time her great and harmless wit, her cheerful gravity, and her obliging behaviour, gained her an acquaintance and friendship with most of any eminent worth or learning, that were at that time in or near that University, and particularly with Mr. John Donne, who then came accidentally to that place. It was that John Donne who was afterwards Doctor Donne, and Dean of St. Paul's, London; and he, at his leaving Oxford, writ, and left there, a character of the beauties of her person and mind. Of the first he says,—

> 'No spring nor summer beauty has such grace
> As I have seen in an *Autumnal* face.'"

This friendship appears to have lasted through life. It was begun when they had passed the middle stage of their career, was marked by the utmost liberality on one side, and the deepest gratitude on the other; for Mr. Donne at the time of its commencement had urgent need of such liberality; and it only terminated when, as Dean of St. Paul's, he preached "her funeral sermon, *with tears*," in the parish-church of Chelsea.

While George Herbert pursued his studies at Cambridge, growing in favour both with God and man, "the greatest diversion from his study was the practice of music, in which he became a great master; and of which he would say, 'that it relieved his drooping spirits, composed his distressed thoughts, and raised his weary soul so far above earth, that it gave him an earnest of the joys of Heaven before he possessed them.'" Here, as in the case of Milton, did the harmony of poetic numbers begin with music; and it is not possible to conceive of any more appropriate foundation for the full development of the poetic faculty. A soul that is thoroughly imbued with music may be understood to want the aid of words, only that they also must be attuned to harmony; while on the other hand, it seems quite possible that the poet, having commenced his task without the aid of music, may never be able to attain to the same perfection as where the two gifts of poetry and music are combined.

George Herbert was not exempt from the reasonable ambition of filling some post of honour in his native country. Hence he very naturally entertained the desire of fitting himself for the higher offices of state by every means of improvement which lay within his reach. Amongst these was foreign travel. But his mother, fearing the consequences to his character and principles, would not consent to his quitting the University, where she believed him to be comparatively safe; and he, with that dutiful submission which none but a mother so revered could have enforced, yielded to her judgment, and cheerfully resigned a

prospect which his youthful fancy had dwelt upon with no ordinary amount of agreeable anticipation.

As a specimen of the close intercourse which existed between George Herbert and his mother, as well as the pious fervour of his own heart, we give the following passages from a letter addressed to his mother in her sickness:—"For myself, dear mother, I always feared sickness more than death, because sickness hath made me unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world. But you are freed from that fear, who have already abundantly discharged that part, having both ordered your family, and so brought your children that they have attained to years of discretion and competent maintenance. So that now if they do not well, the fault cannot be charged on you, whose example and care of them will justify you both to the world, and to your own conscience; insomuch, that whether you turn your thoughts to the life past, or the joys that are to come, you have strong preservatives against all disquiet. And for temporal afflictions, I beseech you to consider all that can happen to you are either afflictions of estate, or of body, or mind; for those of estate, of what poor regard ought they to be, since if we had riches, we are commanded to give them away. So that the best use of them is, having, not to have them. But perhaps, being above the common people, our credit and estimation calls on us to live in a more splendid fashion. But, O God! how easily is that answered, when we consider that the blessings in the Holy Scripture are never given to the *rich* but to the *poor*. I never find, Blessed be the rich, or blessed be the noble; but

Blessed be the meek, and blessed be the poor, and blessed be the mourners, for they shall be comforted."

The mother of George Herbert died in the year 1627. Though well acquainted with the earnestness and depth of his religious feelings, she did not live to see him enter upon the duties of the priesthood. The manner in which these were entered upon and discharged, are described by Isaac Walton as being characterized by a devotedness and zeal which have seldom been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed. When the mind is strongly imbued with the poetic element, the actions of a person's life generally exhibit something of the same nature. It was especially so with George Herbert, on entering upon his holy office. "When at his induction he was shut into Bemerton church, being left there alone to toll the bell, as the law required him; he stayed so much longer than an ordinary time, before he returned to those who waited for him at the church-door, that one of his friends looked in at the window, and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the altar; at which time and place, as he afterwards told his friend, he set some rules to himself, for the future management of his life, and then and there made a vow to keep them." *

The same writer describes the ministerial life of this devout and holy man as strictly in keeping with this commencement. Twice every day he, with his family, attended prayers in the chapel adjoining his house, and such was the consistency of his life and character, "such the inward devotion" which he testified by his

* Life by Isaac Walton.

"humble behaviour" and "visible adoration," that not only his own household attended these services, but "most of his parishioners, and many gentlemen in the neighbourhood." Indeed, "some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence him, that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's *saints'-bell* rang to prayers, that they might also offer to God with him; and would then return back to their plough. And his most holy life was such, that it begot such reverence to God, and to him, that they thought themselves the happier, when they carried Mr Herbert's blessing back with them to their labour."

It would afford an occupation scarcely less profitable than pleasant, were it possible in all similar instances of the dedication of genius to the most exalted purposes, to trace out exactly what the mother actually did, as well as what was the tendency of her own habits, and the individual type of her own character. But unfortunately, in selecting the particular men with regard to whom such details would be most instructive and valuable, we find too often that the mother, if not absent, remains to us only as a shadow or a name. Occasionally the mere lifting up of the corner of some domestic curtain just reveals to us, perhaps the diligent economist—not unfrequently the reconciler of family differences—the teacher of simple Bible truths—or, it may be, the inspirer of hope when the spirit of the boy is about to sink under the discipline of ruder hands. But, like some friend of our own childhood,—perhaps the lost mother of our own infancy, no sooner do we strain our eyes so as to distinguish the real aspect, form, and features of this our

family household image, than the curtain falls, or the image retires into obscurity, and to our inquiring gaze is lost for ever.

In this manner, we search in vain for Milton's mother. That she had some claim to the dignity of aristocratic blood, has been generally supposed. Perhaps she might also claim that higher dignity of being

"The *child* of parents passed into the skies."

For it would seem that religion of a true and earnest stamp was impressed upon all the domestic and household observances of the Milton family. That music occupied a prominent place in the poet's early education, may well be believed; and that love must also have been present, we cannot doubt,—holy, reverent, hallowed love, such as a mother would have been most likely to inspire. But respecting the exact means by which those indelible impressions were produced upon his own mind, which were destined in after years to influence so powerfully the minds of others, we are left very much to our own conjectures.

Milton's last and able biographer thus describes the poet's childhood; and if for the charm of this domestic picture we are indebted to some touches of poetic fancy, it is at least an appropriate occasion for filling up the scene with such accessories as are almost unavoidably suggested by a close and thoughtful study of the principal figures.

"It is a warm and happy home," says this biographer. "Peace, comfort, and industry reign within it. During the day the scrivener is busy with his apprentices and clients; but in the evening the family are

gathered together—the father on one side, the mother on the other, the oldest girl and her brother John seated near, and little Kit lying on the hearth. A grave Puritanic piety was then the order of the households of most of the respectable citizens of London; and in John Milton's house there was more than usual of the accompanying affection for Puritanic habits and modes of thought. And thus a disposition towards the serious, a regard for religion as the chief concern in life, and a dutiful love of the parents who so taught him, would be cultivated in Milton from his earliest years. Happy child, to have such parents; happy parents, to have such a child!" *

Again, as the same writer goes on to describe the elder Milton's musical powers and attainments, and the solemn grandeur of those strains to which the poet must so often have listened in his childhood, we feel that next to the hymns of the angelic choir, nothing could have been more appropriate for the ushering in to its poetic life of that majestic mind which, losing so much of our impressions produced by the direct observance of meaner things, was to be abundantly repaid by almost more than human perception of things celestial, holy, grand, and pure.

Speaking of the airs collected and harmonized to the Psalms by Milton's father, the biographer observes,—"From that time forward we are to fancy that frequently, when the above Psalms were sung in churches in London or elsewhere, it was to music composed by the father of the poet Milton. . . . And so, apart from all that he has given us through his

* Masson's Life of Milton.

son, there yet rests in the air of Britain, capable of being set loose wherever church-bells send their chimes over English earth, or voices are raised in sacred concert round an English or Scottish fireside, some portion of the soul of that admirable man, and his love of sweet sounds." Would that we could tell what part the mother of the poet took in those higher harmonies by which his soul was brought into accord with spiritual intelligences, so as to sing, as no man ever did before or since, of the works and ways of God!

If to trace out by mere casual mention slight records of the mothers of men whose eminence has entitled them to a place in history, could answer any valuable purpose, there is little doubt that such faint allusions might be found scattered through different biographies in sufficient abundance. But unless such records bear clear evidence of maternal influence, unless they show in what manner the mother actually gave a bias to the character and destiny of her son, they can afford but little instruction as regards the practical use of that power which nature has so preeminently placed in the mother's hands.

In speaking of maternal influence affecting the characters of good men, it has become almost a matter of course to mention the mother of Doddridge; though it is much to be regretted that little more is known either of her own character, or of her method of training her child, than that beautiful episode introduced by Orton, the biographer, where he says of Doddridge, —"I have heard him relate, that his mother taught him the history of the Old and New Testaments before he could read, by the assistance of some Dutch

tiles in the chimney of the room where they commonly sat; and her wise and pious reflections upon the stories there represented were the means of making some good impressions upon his heart, which never wore out; and therefore this method of instruction he frequently recommended to parents."

Slight as this little picture is, it seems to have laid hold of the public mind with more than usual tenacity, if we may judge from the frequency with which it is recorded. And from the manner in which it was afterwards dwelt upon hy him who had been the recipient of these early impressions, it becomes peculiarly entitled to all the interest it has excited, and all the attention it has received. It is eminently suggestive, too, of the value of the simplest means of instruction when faithfully and appropriately applied; it is suggestive of how much the mother can actually do in teaching and training her child, apart from what is generally understood by education, but which is in fact the only kind of education that is real and lasting; and it is suggestive to the mother, if she would truly and rightly influence her child, of entering upon her task at that early stage of life when impressions are the deepest and the most enduring, when the field lies open to her entire possession, and when to delay to enter is to leave to others the highest privilege a mother can enjoy.

The Rev. Thomas Scott bears this testimony to his mother,—"that from her method of ruling and teaching her large family, when very young, he derived many of his best maxims concerning the education of his own children."

The Rev. John Newton, too, has left on record the following description of the impressions received at a very early period of his life:—"My mother," he says in a letter to a friend, "I have heard from many, was a pious and experienced Christian. I was her only child; and as she was of a weak constitution and retired temper, almost her whole employment was the care of my education. I have some faint remembrance of her care and her instructions. At a time when I could not have been more than three years of age, she herself taught me, so that when I was five years old I could read with propriety any common book that offered. She stored my memory, which was then very retentive, with chapters and portions of Scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems. . . . How far the best education may fall short of reaching the heart will strongly appear in the sequel of my history; yet I think, for the encouragement of pious parents to do their part faithfully to form their children's minds, I may properly propose myself as an instance."

Many other worthy and honoured names might be added to the list of those good men who have borne faithful and loving testimony to the benefits derived in early life from maternal instruction and care. But, after all, such instances would remain only as a list of notices, so slight as scarcely to be of any value to the reader, each case presenting but little of the means employed for producing those impressions which filial affection has so gratefully recorded.

Some, in fact, may have received deep and lasting impressions from the circumstances of their childhood with which the mother was closely and feelingly asso-

ciated, without the consciousness on her part of any direct influence being imparted. Of Dr. Watts it is recorded in Milner's life, that when an infant, he was often carried by his mother to the prison where her husband was confined for conscience' sake; and that while she was seated on a stone beside the prison-door, he there received the sustenance of life, with who can tell what amount of tears and tenderness wrung from the desolate and suffering mother? Or who can tell what early impress the little heart, thus beating under the cloud of sorrow, might receive, so as to transmit to future generations those "divine songs," which congregated multitudes delight to sing?

We know little of the mother of Dr. Watts, beyond this simple but touching record, and that she was an excellent woman, who, like her son, would seem to have had a taste for poetic numbers; for it is told of her, that when her husband kept a school at Southampton, she used to encourage the boys after their lessons to write verses, and that she used to give those who did so a farthing as a reward. Her own boy would seem to have been a little touched on this point with something of becoming zeal for the poet's honour, for his early composition was this:—

"I write not for a farthing, but to try
How I your farthing writers can defy."

Isaac Watts was at this time only six years of age, and yet had begun to evince a passion for books. His poetical effusions too were so far beyond his years, that his mother on one occasion expressed a doubt whether some verses he had written could really be his

own; when he immediately composed the well-known acrostic which includes the letters of his own name.

Amongst poets, as might be supposed, we find innumerable instances of this superficial kind of notice on the part of the biographer, leaving us only to guess what was the nature of that intimate communion which must naturally have existed between the mother and the child.

Of Cowley, for instance, it is stated, that "he was early left to the care of his mother, in straitened circumstances; that she procured for him, with much difficulty, a literary education, which, from marking the early bloom of his infant understanding, was an object she had much at heart. She lived to enjoy the reward of her solicitude; and, in return, her son in eminence yielded to her the just tribute of filial gratitude."

It would not perhaps be strictly just to attribute the depravity of Savage, in any degree, to his cruel and unprincipled mother, seeing that he was disowned by both parents, and for a long time unconscious of the circumstances of his birth. Yet it is scarcely possible to imagine any situation more calculated to cast a shade over every laudable feeling and endeavour, than that of a young man making the discovery, that he was the child of licentious but distinguished parents, who had the heartless cruelty to cast him unprotected upon public charity.

The mother of Thompson affords one of those numerous instances in which the self-denying sacrifices of maternal affection procure the means of distinction for the child. It is said of Thompson's mother, that

she was remarkable for the faithful discharge of her domestic duties, for her piety, and for the fervour of her imagination. Left early a widow, she so exerted herself as to obtain for her son the opportunity of pursuing his studies in Edinburgh.

From his mother Chatterton received the first impulse which resulted in his premature, and, to him, unfortunate celebrity. Disturbed by his apparent dullness when a child, his mother, upon whom devolved his educational progress, showed him an old musical manuscript in French, which had illuminated capitals. "With this," to use her own words, "he fell in love;" and perhaps from this circumstance originated his passion for antiquarian research. But a more interesting phase of his melancholy career is the lingering hold with which his affections clung to his mother and sister to the last. So long as his means allowed, he sent them remittances of money; and after every other restraint had been cast aside, the earliest and the strongest ties which his heart had ever recognized were not severed until his untimely and miserable death, which took place before he had attained the age of eighteen years.

From his mother's strong taste for music the poet Campbell is supposed to have derived something of his poetic tendency, especially his love for the ballad poetry of Scotland, which he never lost. "His mother, even in the wane of life, used to sing the favourite melodies of her youth, and thus her son, from his cradle, became skilled in sweet sounds, and the power of flowing numbers."

Of the poet Crabbe it is stated, "that his early re-

ligious impressions were strongly influenced by those of his mother, who was a deeply devout woman. Her mildness, humility, patient endurance of affliction and sufferings, strongly recommended her example to her son."

As confirming the impressions which these briefly delineated facts suggest, we are reminded of a passage in the 'Edinburgh Review,' in an article on George Selwin. The writer "presumes that he inherited his peculiar talent from his mother, a daughter of General Farrington, as she enjoyed a high reputation for social humour . . . thus adding another to the many instances of gifted men formed by mothers, or endowed by them with the best and the brightest of their qualities. Schiller, Goethe, the Schlegels, Victor Hugo, Canning, Lord Brougham, occur to us on the instant; and Curran said, 'The only inheritance I could boast of from my poor father, was the very scanty one of an unattractive face and person like his own; and if the world has ever attributed to me something more valuable than face or person, or than earthly wealth, it was that another and dearer parent gave her child a fortune from the treasure of her own mind.'"

If with regard to our poets we have to regret that so little remains to us of any clear delineation of the mother's individual character or means of influence, it is the same with men of letters generally. The schools of learning in which they were taught, the competitors with whom they contended for distinction, the honours they obtained, and the literary course which they subsequently pursued,—these are for the most part all which their biographers have deemed it important to

record. Indeed, it is not improbable, that these facts are all which it has been possible to record of such men, the mother being totally forgotten.

It might not improbably happen, in many such cases, that the range of the mother's influence never extended to that branch or element of character in which her learned or literary son was destined to become conspicous. There is a *moral*, if people would only believe it, which has much to do with placing human character upon the basis of truth or falsehood, bravery or cowardice, dignity or littleness; but has extremely little to do with the acquisition of languages, or indeed with any other of those pursuits which go tc make up a literary man; only so far as it may incite to industry as a virtue, and warn from idleness as a vice; or as it may inspire a lofty ambition for all excellence, with a proportionate contempt for all inferiority and meanness.

Thus it is interesting, as well as instructive, to observe how much more clearly the maternal character is sometimes developed where the son has been eminent for bravery—for enterprise—for perseverance in some marked, and perhaps singular course, than where he has trod the more frequented, though honoured path, along which it is esteemed a privilege to walk. And because it is so, the act of walking there can involve comparatively little of that determined endurance, that stern self-denial, that consecration of the whole being to one purpose,—a purpose perhaps neither admired nor accredited by men,—which results from a mighty moral power, in the exercise of which women are often more magnanimous than men.

It is worthy of observation, too, in connection with those mothers whose influence history has condescended to record, how largely the quality of *bravery* has entered into their own characters—moral bravery especially, but often physical as well. That woman can be brave, even in our luxurious times, we have recently had evidence too painfully convincing, in what some of the most delicately nurtured of our own countrywomen have nobly done and suffered; and that in a climate generally supposed unfriendly to the manifestation of any great amount of energy either bodily or mental. Nor is there cause to fear, that from woman's actual nature this inestimable quality will ever quite die out. The real danger to be apprehended arises from the possibility of this quality being so totally ignored or lost sight of in our systems of polite education, that its practical usefulness should never enter into the concerns of daily life, and so die out undreamed of, or only surprise us once in a century, by starting into life under some terrible calamity, to show the world of how much real heroism women are naturally capable.

Men who have risen from obscurity, and who have had their own way to make, are often those who have been most indebted to their mothers, and indebted to this very quality of bravery or magnanimity for setting them an example of endurance, and stimulating them to overcome all obstacles that might stand in the way of their adventurous or laudable career. We do not find the merely tender mother remembered with the same reverence as the mother who was both tender and brave. Many men have had tender mothers

whom they feared to agitate or injure; and thus have been to some extent kept in check by regard for their feelings. So far so good. Where a woman is incapable of more, she must make the cry of her weakness stand in the place of her calm "God speed thee in the path of right!" But this feeble cry will not last. It cannot even be repeated without failure. The boyhood of the noblest life has never been a time of strength, but of weakness; and yet man must be made strong, in order to be made great. Before his full strength comes to him, he will often resist the interference of those who have attained to the vast superiority of manhood themselves. But the bravery, the magnanimity, the true greatness of a woman has nothing in it which puts him to shame, because he knows instinctively that it must ever be allied to a certain weakness or tenderness, without which it would be unnatural and hideous. He can therefore accept all the aid which he requires from such a quarter: and in this secret of his nature lies much of the influence which a mother is able to bring to bear upon the character of her son.

Amongst the self-formed men whose history, in their own curious details, forms so instructive a lesson for youth, there are few more remarkable than Benjamin Franklin. Although the scientific as well as political pursuits of his later life stamped him most peculiarly as a public character, there was much in the enterprise of his early youth, in the self-denial which he practised, in his persevering endurance, and in the many vicissitudes he experienced, which called forth into prominent action that strong moral power which

one feels tempted to believe that his mother must have had some share in cultivating and maturing. It is true that Franklin, in his own account of his early years, speaks much more of his father, who must have been in some respects an extraordinary man. He was descended, too, from a line of ancestors whose sturdy nonconformist principles no doubt imparted a considerable amount of moral strength to their habits and modes of thought. Many of them were sufferers for their faith, not unaccustomed to estimating the value of the claims of conscience, when balanced against worldly interest. He relates of them, that in the time of Queen Mary they had an English Bible, which for safety they used to keep fastened under the cover of a stool. When sufficiently secure to venture upon reading in the Holy Book, the stool was turned up; when apprehensive of danger, it was reversed, and the Bible was then effectually concealed from view.

Franklin says of his mother that she was the daughter of Peter Folgier, one of the first settlers in New England, of whom Cotton Mather speaks as a "godly and learned Englishman." Abiah, his mother, lived to be eighty-five years old, never, like his father, "having had any sickness but that of which she died."

One slight mention of his mother by Franklin presents an instance of that partial lifting of the domestic curtain, which creates a strong but vain desire for seeing more. A difference of long standing existed betwixt Benjamin and an elder brother, under whom he had been bound to learn his business. And it is evident that the young adventurer, with his bold flights, and strange successes, returning laden with proofs of

favour from high quarters, as well as proofs of his own cleverness and good management, must have excited the envy of his more plodding but less successful brother. At all events, their early differences seemed not likely to be healed; and, on the eve of a departure which might separate the younger brother for a long time from his family, his mother, he says, spoke to the elder of a reconciliation, urging her desire to see them on good terms together, and that they might live for the future as brothers. Her endeavours, however, proved fruitless, and Benjamin departed, bearing with him some small gifts from his mother, "as tokens of her love."

Whether in the onward and upward career of this energetic man, the humble mother was lost sight of, it is not easy to discover; for though by his own statement she lived to a great age, his autobiography bears no trace of any close intercourse with his parents, after he had attained a position of comparative independence; nor have the biographers of Franklin borne any further testimony to the experience or the virtues of his mother.

The history of George Washington, while displaying a character invested perhaps with more calm and quiet dignity than has ever before or since been associated with so much celebrity, is not wanting in proofs of maternal influence having had much to do with the formation of the early habits of this distinguished patriot, statesman, and general.

As in so many other cases where the son has risen to a position of eminence, the mother of Washington was early left a widow. She was the second wife of

Lawrence Washington, formerly a Miss Aylett, and at the time of her husband's death, when George, her eldest child, had only attained his eleventh year, was left with the undisputed guardianship of five children, entrusted with the proceeds of all their property until they should severally be of age. "Mrs. Washington proved herself worthy of the trust. Endowed with plain, direct good sense, thorough conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly, but kindly, exciting deference, while she inspired affection. George, being her eldest son, was thought to be her favourite, yet she never gave him undue preference, and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper, and a spirit of command; but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity and justice.

"Tradition gives an interesting picture of the widow, with her little flock gathered round her as was her daily wont, reading to them lessons of religion and morality out of some standard work. Her favourite volume was Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, Moral and Divine. The admirable maxims therein contained for outward action as well as self-government, sank deep into the mind of George, and doubtless had a great influence in forming his character. They certainly were exemplified in his conduct through life. His mother's manual, bearing her name,—Mary Washington, written with her own hand,—was ever preserved by him with filial care, and may still be seen in the ar-

chives of Mount Vernon. A precious document! Let those who wish to know the moral foundation of his character consult its pages." *

It would seem, from all that can be learned of the mother of Washington, that she was rather a woman of prudent care-taking habits, than of enterprising or ambitious character. She had indeed a great charge upon her hands in the complicated affairs of her husband's property, entrusted entirely to her discretion and management, so far as to the faithful carrying out of his wishes. Each of the sons was provided for in a competent and liberal manner; but the property inherited from their father was situated in different parts of the country, and must have required considerable skill and prudence in the husbanding of each portion, so as to turn all to the best account; nor is it improbable that in such exact business habits as must have become familiar to the mother, may have originated that extreme attention to business details for which her son was so remarkable.

The mother of Washington does not appear to have possessed any of those heroic qualities which are to be found in many of the mothers of great generals or great adventurers; rather sound business talents, with strict justice, clear moral sense, and deep religious feeling. Hence, perhaps, that combination in his own character so rarely to be met with, of the energetic warrior and the quiet husbandman; hence, perhaps, that union of the higher and the more familiar and useful qualities which are regarded by the admirers of Washington as constituting an almost perfect character.

* Life of George Washington, by Washington Irving.

The first fever of enterprise with which the youthful mind of Washington was possessed, appears to have occurred about his fourteenth year, when his brother Lawrence obtained for him the position of midshipman in the expedition commanded by General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon. The youth had entered into this project with all that quiet enthusiasm which is always the deepest; but when the time of his departure arrived, and it was found that the mother's consent could not be obtained, he submitted to maternal authority with that high estimate of duty which marked the whole of his after course, and which of itself would have constituted him a hero, even if he had never been called upon the field of battle, or the stage of public life.

There was much to be said in favour of the mother's decision, as we find in a letter from a friend of the family, which is given in the 'Life of Washington,' by Mr. Sparkes. "I am afraid," says this friend, "that Mrs. Washington will not keep to her first resolution. She seems to dislike George's going to sea, and says several persons have told her it is a bad scheme. She offers several trifling objections, such as fond mothers are apt to suggest; and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it. She persisted," says this biographer, "in opposing this plan, and it was given up; nor ought this decision to be ascribed to obstinacy or maternal weakness. This was her eldest son, whose character and manners must already have exhibited a promise full of solace and hope to a widowed mother, on whom alone devolved the charge of four younger children. To see him sepa-

rated from her at so tender an age, exposed to the perils of accident and the world's rough usage, without a parent's voice to counsel, or a parent's hand to guide; and to enter upon a theatre of action which would for ever remove him from her presence, was a trial to her fortitude and sense of duty which she could not be expected to hazard without reluctance and concern."

But the maternal appeal was not always to be listened to with the same obedience. As time passed on, and the boy advanced to manhood, he must have discovered that the judicious care-taker of his childhood was more a mother than a heroine; and while conscious of an element in his own being far different from this, it was scarcely possible that he should listen without emotion to the increasing claims of his country upon all that was daring, energetic, and chivalrous in his nature.

The conflict which from these causes he must have at times experienced, has been well described by Washington Irving, on the occasion of the fitting out of an expedition under General Braddock. It was one in which the Indians were to be employed, and involving great danger, though not unattended with the most ardent hopes of success. All things were being prepared with the utmost expedition. "The transports were all arrived safe, and the men in health; provisions, Indians, carriages, and horses, were already provided, at least, were to be esteemed so. . . .

"The din and stir of warlike preparation disturbed the quiet of Mount Vernon. Washington looked down from his rural retreat upon the ships of war and transports, as they passed up the Potomac, with the array

of arms gleaming along their decks. The booming of cannon echoed among his groves. Alexandria was but a few miles distant; occasionally he mounted his horse and rode to that place. It was like a garrisoned town, teeming with troops, and resounding with the drum and fife. A brilliant campaign was about to open under the auspices of an experienced general, and with all the means and appurtenances of European warfare. How different from the starveling expeditions he had hitherto been doomed to conduct! What an opportunity to efface the memory of recent disaster! All his thoughts of rural life were put to flight; the military part of his character was again in the ascendant; his great desire was to join the expedition as a volunteer."

This desire was reported to General Braddock, who immediately sent an order inviting Washington to join his staff. "His mother heard with concern of another projected expedition into the wilderness: hurrying to Mount Vernon, she entreated her son not again to expose himself to the perils and hardships of these frontier campaigns. She doubtless felt the value of his presence at home, to manage and protect the complicated interests of the domestic connection, and had watched with solicitude over his adventurous campaigning, where so much family welfare was at hazard. However much a mother's pride may have been gratified by his early advancement and renown, she had rejoiced on his return to the safer walks of peaceful life. She was not a woman to be dazzled by military glory. The passion for arms which mingled with the more sober elements of Washington's character, would

seem to have been inherited from his father's side of the house; it was, in fact, the old chivalrous spirit of his ancestors.

"His mother had once prevented him from entering the navy, when a gallant frigate was at hand, anchored in the waters of the Potomac. With all his deference for her, which he retained through life, he could not resist this appeal to his warlike sympathies, which called him to the head-quarters of General Braddock at Alexandria."

Here the young hero was received with the utmost cordiality, and it does not appear that the mother ever again attempted to interfere with his public career. He had burst the maternal bonds so far as related to his pursuit of warlike enterprise; but as the "pomp and circumstance of war" could never deprive him of the capacity for enjoying peaceful and rural occupations, so it is much to his honour, that no success in life, neither the fame nor the flattery which always attend upon a brilliant career, could ever alienate him from the mother who had watched so anxiously over his early years, or induce him to neglect those filial duties, which from a heart so faithful as his were freely and spontaneously rendered.

Mrs. Washington lived to the great age of eighty-two. A short time previous to her death, she was visited by her son, who perceived that she was sinking under a fatal disease. "He took an affecting and final leave of her, convinced that he should never see her again. She had been a widow forty-six years. Through life she was remarkable for vigour of mind and body, simplicity of manners, and uprightness of character

She must have felt a mother's joy at the success and renown of her son, but this caused no change in her deportment, or style of living. Whenever he visited her at her dwelling, even in the height of his greatness, he literally returned to the scenes and domestic habits of his boyhood. Neither pride nor vanity mingled with the feelings excited by the attentions she received as the mother of Washington. She listened to his praises and was silent, or added only, that he had been a good son, and that she believed he had done his duty as a man."*

* Life of Washington, by J. Sparkes.

IX.

THE MOTHER OF JOHN WESLEY.

There are few men, of whose history we have any distinct knowledge, so clearly marked out by nature and circumstances for their own especial work as John Wesley. Indeed, the whole family of the Wesleys appear to have been endowed with rare qualities both of head and heart; amongst which stands forth pre-eminently a boldness of determination in the way of duty, which no worldly consideration, and no claims of kindred or affection, were able to move. Along whatever path the hand of duty led, they were prompt and obedient to follow. Obedient nowhere else, their submission here is the more astonishing. Whatever hindered their progress in the course which they believed themselves called to pursue, even if a right hand or a right eye, it must be struck off, or torn out. Ease, pleasure, prosperity, the good opinion of men, must be shaken off as the dust from their feet, when a call of duty required of them such sacrifice.

From the father to the sons, and no less remarkably in the case of their mother, this prompt and unhesitating determination seems to have been their leading

characteristic; and, setting aside the fanaticism of the times, and the peculiar circumstances in which the Wesleys lived, as requiring the application of peculiar means to the ends desired; setting aside, too, some strange blemishes of character always attaching more or less to tendencies like theirs, there is, perhaps, no stronger evidence of true greatness than that which distinguished this family in so many of its members.

It is a little remarkable that the father of John Wesley, left at an early age to the kindness of some Nonconformist friends, should have become so disgusted with the views and the practices of the Dissenters as to throw up the many advantages which the patronage of these friends had promised for him, and, entering himself at college as a poor scholar, should ever afterwards have devoted himself strictly and faithfully to the discharge of his duties as a clergyman of the Established Church. In the same manner the wife, whom above all women he must have done wisely in choosing, was the child of Nonconformist parents; for some time a Socinian in her religious sentiments, but afterwards a zealous adherent of the same religious profession as her husband. Indeed, there *could* not have been any essential difference betwixt two such characters so closely allied. There *must* have been cordial union in all matters of the highest importance, or there could have been little happiness, and no peace for them.

A curious instance of their mode of differing, and the serious consequences to which it led, is given in Southey's Life of Wesley. "When the Revolution was effected, Mr. Wesley (father of John) was the

first who wrote in its defence. He dedicated the work to Queen Mary, and was rewarded for it with the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. It is said that if the Queen had lived longer, he would have obtained more preferment. His wife differed from him in opinion concerning the Revolution; but as she understood the duty and the wisdom of obedience, she did not express her dissent; and he discovered it a year only before King William died, by observing that she did not say *Amen* to the prayers for him. Instead of imitating her forbearance, he questioned her upon the subject; and when she told him she did not believe the Prince of Orange was king, he declared he would never live with her as a husband until she did. In pursuance of this unwarrantable vow, he immediately took horse and rode away; nor did she hear of him again till the death of the king, about twelve months afterwards, released him from his rash and criminal engagement. John was their first child after this separation."*

But the union of the elder Wesleys must not be judged of by this extraordinary breach of the marriage compact. Seldom has intercourse been more really harmonious, or more blessed than theirs. In her natural endowments and her education, but especially in her superior and commanding intellect, Mrs. Wesley was exactly the woman to fill that honoured place in her family and household which boys are so quick to recognize when held by real worth, but so ready to dispute when only assumed as a matter of authority or caprice.

Mrs. Wesley was the daughter of Dr. Annesley,

* Life of Wesley, by Robert Southey.

one of the ejected ministers; and it is more than probable that her mind was early drawn to the consideration of subjects closely connected with religious scruples, as well as belief, by the circumstances of her family, as well as by the frequency with which such topics must have arisen in the conversation at that time prevailing in general society.

"It was about the year 1689 that she became the wife of Mr. Wesley, when she was about nineteen or twenty. . . . She had nineteen children, most of whom lived to be educated, and ten came to man's and woman's estate. Her son John mentions the calm serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by her thirteen children. All these were educated by herself; and as she was a woman who lived by rule, she methodized and arranged everything so exactly, that to each operation she had a time, and time sufficient to transact all the business of the family. It appears also, from several of their private papers, that she had no small share in managing the secular concerns of the rectory. The tithes and glebe were much under her inspection."*

Never was a more perfect code of laws than that laid down by Mrs. Wesley for the management of children, and no woman could have better opportunity for testing the operation of these laws by experience. From their highest duties to God—from the lisping of their infant prayers, down to their respectful and courteous manner of speaking to servants, nothing was neglected; and when we add, what is stated by her son, that she even taught them as infants to *cry softly,*

* Dr. Adam Clarke.

there remains no further evidence necessary to prove the practical efficiency of her plans. Much, however, in Mrs. Wesley's opinion, depended upon that essential point which, according to the custom of the times, was called *breaking their wills.* Had this been expressed as the teaching of proper obedience, it would be at once more intelligible, and better adapted to the habits of the present day. But Mrs. Wesley was strong and earnest here. Indeed, with her there could be no half convictions, as there were no half measures, or half duties. In writing on this subject, she uses the following impressive and forcible language: "I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children ensures their after wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident if we further consider that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable Heaven or hell depends on this, so that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work—makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable."

This is strong language; but so everything is strong, and real, and deep, and true, which has good and evil depending upon it, to a nature like that of Mrs. Wesley; and we find that with all this Spartan stoicism, never was parent more beloved and confided in than

she was by all her numerous children. Her own words can best explain the true meaning of her system, a meaning most fully understood, appreciated, and complied with by those who were the subjects of her rigorous discipline. "In the esteem of the world," she says, "they pass for kind and indulgent whom I call cruel parents; who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as in sport to teach their children to do things which in a while after they severely beat them for doing. . . . When the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of its parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertences may be passed by."

"Mrs. Wesley," says Adam Clarke, "never considered herself discharged from the care of her children. Into all situations she followed them with her prayers and counsels; and her sons, even when at the university, found the utility of her wise and parental instructions. They proposed to her all their doubts, and consulted her in all their difficulties."

It would not be possible here to give any adequate idea of those wonderful letters of this admirable woman to her sons and daughters, which included almost all the great essential points of Christian faith and doctrine, clearly, strongly, and yet always simply set forth. And yet the great mass of her most valuable papers was consumed in a fire which destroyed their house, and endangered the lives of the family. How she could find opportunity for such deep and earnest occupation is a mystery not easily solved by those whose constant cry is "want of time;" only

that system and method may be made to work wonders in every department of life. And Mrs. Wesley was systematic in everything. Her devotional exercises appear never to have been neglected under any circumstances, and these claimed her faithful attention three times every day—morning, *noon*, and night. As her children grew older, and so numerous that she could not herself retire with each one alone, she so arranged these duties that the eldest retired alone with the youngest, and so on in their order, each child having thus the opportunity every day of reading, meditating, and receiving or imparting religious instruction without interruption.

It would seem as if almost every question of importance, every phase of doubt, and every feeling with which a devout mind could be exercised, had been submitted by John Wesley to his mother; and on all these she was able to write with the same earnestness and ability, often introducing kind motherly hints about health, and other considerations connected with economy and good management, which their circumstances required. After one of these cautions in a letter to her son, she goes on to say: "Believe me, my dear son, old age is the worst time we can choose to mend either our lives or our fortunes. If the foundations of solid piety are not laid betimes in sound principles and virtuous dispositions, and if we neglect, while strength and vigour last, to lay up something ere the infirmities of age overtake us, it is a hundred to one odds that we shall die both poor and wicked.

"Ah! my dear son, did you stand with me on the

verge of life, and see before your eyes a vast expanse, an unlimited duration of being, which you may shortly enter upon, you cannot conceive how all the inadvertences, mistakes, and sins of youth would rise to your view; and how different the sentiments of sensitive pleasures would be then from what they are now, while health is entire, and seems to promise many years of life."

The variety of subjects discussed in this correspondence is not more astonishing than the ability with which all are treated. Predestination is one of the topics; the lawfulness of enjoyment another; and even love forms the theme of one admirable letter, which Adam Clarke says, justly, "would be a gem even in the best written treatise on the powers and passions of the human mind." In this letter we find the following most judicious hints: "Suffer now a word of advice. However curious you may be in searching into the nature, or in distinguishing the properties, of the passions or virtues of human kind, for your own private satisfaction, be very cautious in giving nice distinctions in public assemblies; for it does not answer the true end of preaching, which is to amend men's lives, and not to fill their heads with unprofitable speculations. And after all that can be said, every affection of the soul is better known by experience than by any description that can be given of it. An honest man will more easily apprehend what is meant by being zealous for God against sin, when he hears what are the properties and effects of true zeal, than the most accurate definition of its essence."

In a long letter to one of her daughters who was

separated from her parents for some time, Mrs. Wesley gives a full and clear view of Christian faith and practice, with the scriptural and rational grounds or foundations of both. No sooner were her valuable papers destroyed, than she set about writing others for the benefit of her children; some containing profitable exercises of thought for different periods of the day; and one, an able exposition of what is called the Apostles' Creed, taking part by part, and almost word after word. Throughout the whole of her letters to her children, earnest and clear as they are, the utmost humility as regards herself prevails, with frequent expressions of the tenderest affection, rendered the more touching by the conviction which they convey, that the love of such a woman would be deep, and true, and unchangeable as the principles upon which it was based.

"You did well," she says in one of her letters to John, "to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do ere you leave the world. . . . I should be glad to have you with me when I die. But as I have been an unprofitable servant, during the course of a long life, I have no reason to hope for so great an honour, so high a favour, as to be employed in doing our Lord any service in the article of death." Again, in speaking of the happiness derived from the presence of God, Mrs. Wesley says, "I often think, that were He always present to our mind, as we are present to Him, there would be no pain nor sense of misery. I have long since chosen Him for my only good; my all; my pleasure, my happiness in this world, as well

as in the world to come. And although I have not been so faithful to his grace as I ought to have been, yet I feel my spirit adheres to its choice, and aims daily at cleaving steadfastly unto God. Yet one thing often troubles me, that, notwithstanding I know that while we are present with the body, we are absent from the Lord; notwithstanding I have no taste, no relish left for anything the world calls pleasure, yet I do not long to go home, as in reason I ought to do. This often shocks me: and as I constantly pray, almost without ceasing, for thee, my son, so I beg you likewise to pray for me, that God would make me better, and take me at the best."

These letters, as will appear evident, were some of them written late in life. The short extracts here given convey but little idea of the clearness and correctness of the writer's religious views. There were those who felt interest in disputing about Mrs. Wesley as to whether she leaned most to the opinions of her younger sons, or to those of her son Samuel; especially on such points as justification by faith. Such discussions would neither be profitable nor appropriate here. If all her three sons were good men, as there is every reason to believe; and if the sincere Christian is as safe beneath the roof of the conventicle as the dome of the cathedral, as there is also good reason for believing; it would be an unwelcome task, in relation to such a mother, so beloved and honoured by her children, and so loving and honouring them in return, to attempt to prove that she felt more sympathy with one than another in her religious views. Rather let us view her character as it really was, prac-

tically and influentially; and in order to do this more clearly, let us hear how Adam Clarke speaks of Mrs. Wesley personally.

"Mrs. Wesley had read much, and thought much; and thus her mind was cultivated. Greek, Latin, and French, and both logic and metaphysics had formed part of her studies; and these latter acquisitions, without appearing—for she studiously endeavours to conceal them—are felt to great advantage in all her writings.

"She had a strong and vigorous mind, and an undaunted courage. She feared no difficulty; and in search of truth, at once looked the most formidable objections full in the face; and never hesitated to give any enemy all the vantage-ground he could gain, when she rose up to defend either the doctrines or the precepts of the religion of the Bible. She was not only graceful, but beautiful in her person. Her sister Judith, painted by Sir Peter Lely, is represented as a very beautiful woman. One who well knew both, said, 'Beautiful as Miss Annesley appears, she was far from being as beautiful as Mrs. Wesley.'"

Such was the mother of the Wesleys, a woman preeminently remarkable for the manner in which she could blend authority with affection in the management of her children. Her manner of teaching them in the commencement of their education was peculiar, especially in not allowing them to learn to read while very young. Indeed, in all that Mrs. Wesley did, there was reason as well as method. One cannot suppose there could possibly be irregularity or confusion in any part of her establishment; but rather, strong

evidence throughout of that high order of management which is in perfect keeping with self-possession and great outward quiet, because it is based upon the exact adaptation of means to ends. Under such management, there is no waste of resources from being misapplied, and consequently no useless expenditure of time or effort. Would that this happy secret could be learned by those who think that good management consists in general disturbance and incessant toil, and who thus make life a burden to themselves, and a misery to all their friends.

But the most remarkable feature of Mrs. Wesley's character was its moral grandeur—not shown in the assumption of dignity or greatness, but rather in the true simplicity resembling that which is recognized in some of the noblest structures of Grecian architecture. This moral dignity was chiefly evidenced by the influence which the mother always exercised over her sons —not that she used this power, as such, after they had attained to years of maturity. In the withholding of direct authority lay much of her wisdom: she had done the best she could for them before they were of age to act for themselves, they must then take their own course. If they had not learned prudence and discretion then, her authority could do little for them. In their early studies the boys were accustomed to look up to their mother as their daily instructress; and concerning all those points on which religious controversy was then so active, she was able to assist them by her deep thought, and her ardent thirst for truth. But chiefly she was their faithful guide, the constant inspirer of their aspirations after that attainment of the

holiness of life and character which lies beyond all controversy, and which the conflicts of human party or prejudice can never reach.

On the more vital points of their religious experience the sons always appealed to their mother, exulting amongst themselves when her approbation was obtained, more than they would have done in the favour of a monarch. In this the strong moral power of the mother was clearly and beautifully manifested. Daring and defiant as these men sometimes were to others, and by no means remarkable for their meekness or conciliation in general, they always came back with unabated reverence to their mother, fearing her rebuke far more than they did the assaults of their numerous and sometimes bitter enemies, because they knew, and had known from their earliest years, that she was one who would have regarded their disobedience to the will of God as far more calamitous than even death itself.

Well indeed might the elder Wesley have calculated his difficulties, and especially those in his rude parish of Epworth, when he chose such a woman for the companion of his lot. His parishioners, little accustomed to the discipline which he thought it right to exercise, or the truths which he felt himself called upon to speak, regarded him for some time with feelings of such bitter animosity as to endanger his personal safety. More than once his house was set on fire; and on one of these occasions, so frightful was the calamity, that several members of the family were only rescued at the most imminent peril of their lives. John, then a child of six years old, was saved almost by miracle.

The mother thrice attempted to face the raging flames that burst in upon her, and, thrice baffled, resorted to such earnest prayer as hearts like hers alone can utter; after which, she describes herself as having *waded* through the fire. All, however, escaped, though John was rescued last, and a moment afterwards the roof of the house fell in; so that when the child was placed in his father's arms, all who stood by to gaze upon that appalling spectacle must have seen that by a moment's delay he would have been inevitably buried in the ruins. No wonder that the father, on receiving him safely in his arms, cried out, "Come, neighbours, let us kneel down: let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight children: let the house go, I am rich enough!"

It is said that John Wesley remembered this deliverance through life with the deepest gratitude. In all probability it was accepted by him as additional evidence that his life, with those rare endowments with which he was so singularly gifted, was given and preserved for some especial purpose, although in early youth it must have been far from manifest to himself what that purpose would be. In reference to this deliverance from the fire, he had a house in flames engraved as an emblem under one of his portraits, with these words for the motto:—"Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?"

The influences brought to bear upon the early training of the Wesleys must not be judged of by the character of John alone. The three brothers, Samuel, John, and Charles, were all remarkable and highly gifted men, and all deeply indebted to their mother for

her judicious care. It is said that Samuel, the oldest brother, most resembled his mother. He had, perhaps, the largest share of prudence and discernment, accompanied by a natural turn for wit and satire, which he not unfrequently directed against the eccentric movements of his more enthusiastic and less calculating brothers. All the family, however, appear to have been occasionally left entirely to their mother's oversight, the father being sometimes called away for a considerable length of time in his attendance upon other duties.

In one of these long periods of individual responsibility, the character of Mrs. Wesley was developed under a somewhat remarkable aspect, though in nothing inconsistently with that faithfulness and simplicity which so strongly marked the general tenour of her actions. Nor is it the least admirable feature in such developments, that we always find her a true wife; never awakening strife by ill-timed avowal of her strong opinions, though sometimes under the necessity of adopting a bolder line of conduct than mere passive submission would seem to warrant.

It is indeed an easy method, and one well suited to some dispositions, to escape all the burden and anxiety of personal responsibility, by settling it, that a woman has not and ought not to have any will of her own in the married state. Like the devotee who submits all points of conscience to her priest, the wife, thus looking at her position, has nothing to consider but her husband's wish; and so long as that is faithfully complied with, she has no condemnation to fear. There are others, however, and Mrs. Wesley seems to have been one of these, who believe that they have absolute duties

of their own, especially as mothers and heads of families, which they are called upon to discharge unless prevented by direct command; and if it should happen to such a woman that she and her husband see differently with regard to a point of practical duty, alas for the consequences to their domestic peace!

We shall see what Mrs. Wesley did in such a case; and we cannot do better than quote from the admirable biography already referred to. During the different periods of her husband's absence from home, there being no afternoon service at Epworth, "Mrs. Wesley prayed with her own family on Sunday evenings, read a sermon, and engaged afterwards in religious conversation. Some of the parishioners who came in accidentally were not excluded; and she did not think it proper that their presence should interrupt the duty of the hour. Induced by the report which these persons made, others requested permission to attend; and in this manner from thirty to forty persons usually assembled. After this had continued some time, she happened to find an account of the Danish missionaries in her husband's study, and was much impressed by the perusal. The book strengthened her desire of doing good; she chose the best and most awakening sermons, and spoke with more freedom, more warmth, more affection to the neighbours who attended at her evening prayers: their numbers increased in consequence, for she did not think it right to deny any who asked admittance. More persons came at length than the apartment could hold, and the thing was represented to her husband in such a manner, that he wrote to her, objecting to her conduct, because, he said, it 'looked

particular' because of her sex, and because he was at that time in a public station, of a character which rendered it the more necessary that she should do nothing to attract censure, and he recommended that some other person should read for her. She began her reply by heartily thanking him for dealing so plainly and faithfully with her in a matter of no common concern. As to its 'looking particular,' she said, 'I grant it does, and so does almost everything that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God, or the salvation of souls, if it be performed out of a pulpit, or in the way of common conversation; because, in our corrupt age, the utmost care and diligence has been used to banish all discourse of God or spiritual concerns out of society, as if religion were never to appear out of the closet, and we were to be ashamed of nothing so much as of confessing ourselves to be Christians.' To the objection on account of her sex, she answered, that as she was a woman, so she was also mistress of a large family; and though the superior charge lay upon him as their head and minister, yet, in his absence, she could not but look upon every soul which he had left under her care, as a talent committed to her under a trust by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth. 'If,' she added, 'I am unfaithful to Him or to you, in neglecting to improve these talents, how shall I answer to Him when He shall command me to render an account of my stewardship?'"

But while Mrs. Wesley laboured faithfully to convince her husband that what she did was under the solemn conviction of duty; and while she did this in the manner most likely to recommend the course she

was pursuing to a man of high principles and sound judgment like Mr. Wesley; the curate of Epworth, a man of very different character, was making himself busy with the matter by describing the conduct of Mrs. Wesley to her husband in such terms as justly to awaken his alarm as well as his serious disapprobation. It was stated privately to the husband, that a *conventicle* was held in his house, and a second remonstrance was despatched in stronger terms than the first.

Mrs. Wesley did not reply to this "until some days had elapsed, for she deemed it necessary that both should take time to consider before her husband finally determined in a matter which she felt to be of great importance. She expressed her astonishment that any effect upon his opinions, much more any change in them, should be produced by the senseless clamour of two or three of the worst persons in his parish; and she represented to him the good which had been done by inducing a much more frequent and regular attendance at church, and reforming the general habits of the people; and the evil which would result from discontinuing such meetings, especially by the prejudices which it would excite against the curate in those persons who were sensible that they derived benefit from the religious opportunities which would thus be taken away through his interference. After stating these things clearly and judiciously, she concluded thus, in reference to her own duty as a wife:—'If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you *desire* me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your *positive command*

in such full and express terms as may absolve me from guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Mr. Wesley made no further objections; and thoroughly respecting, as he did, the principles and the understanding of his wife, he was perhaps ashamed that the representations of meaner minds should have prejudiced him against her conduct. John and Charles were at this time under their mother's care; she devoted such a portion of time as she could afford, to discourse with each child by itself, on one night of the week, upon the duties and the hopes of Christianity; and it may well be believed that these circumstances of their childhood had no inconsiderable influence upon their proceedings when they became the founders and directors of a new community of Christians."

In considering the great importance attached to their mother's character and opinions by John Wesley and his brothers, we must not overlook the fact, that she was a woman of highly cultivated mind, that she understood Greek and Latin, and that theology had formed no small part of her own early studies. Whatever then may be the value attaching to the high moral and religious tone of her character, it would scarcely be reasonable to suppose that without these intellectual advantages Mrs. Wesley would ever have been in an equal degree the friend and counsellor of sons who, as men and gentlemen, were well able to appreciate the worth of superior talents, as well as high scholastic attainments.

Accordingly we find that as the father sank into

the vale of life, the mother, who was considerably younger, became the constant adviser of her sons, and perhaps especially so of John, whose early scruples, added to the variety of changes which passed over his inner life while yet a youth, must have rendered him a source of considerable anxiety to a mother who seems always to have looked upon him as marked out for some especial call of duty, or some extraordinary position in life. The question thus became one of immense importance, how such remarkable qualifications, such unusual indications of character, and especially such capability of strong and enduring purpose, should be directed aright.

While pursuing his studies at college, John Wesley appears to have communicated freely and fully with his parents on all points of conduct and opinion, many of which were beginning to disturb his peace. In relation to his own fitness for being ordained to the priestly office, his most serious apprehensions were awakened; and here his father, with that good sense which formed one of his most striking characteristics, expressing, as he often did, his strong dislike to a "callow clergyman," advised him to wait. In giving this advice, he concludes with the words of one who feels that the burden is about to be removed from his own shoulders, adding, "Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is but a little way behind him. My eyes and heart are now almost all I have left, and I bless God for them."

The mother, perhaps with more of the feeling that life—active, responsible life—was before her, advised her son to go on, to decide, and thus to place himself

in such a position as to render immediate consecration of the heart and life to God more binding and imperative. "And now," said she, "in good earnest resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary; all things beside are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy."

Soon after this earnest discussion upon one of the most important decisions of his life, John Wesley consulted his mother on the subject of a book which had just at that time laid strong hold of his mind and feelings. In this book the views of Thomas à Kempis with regard to the indulgence of natural cheerfulness, and participation in the natural pleasures of life, perplexed him exceedingly. Naturally cheerful himself, he could not agree with the writer that all mirth or pleasure is useless, if not actually sinful. It was on this occasion that the mother of John Wesley expressed herself in those memorable words, worthy of being recorded amongst the best and noblest specimens of that high morality which has Christian faith for its foundation. Having agreed with her son that the author of this treatise was one who had more zeal than knowledge, and who would unnecessarily strew the paths of life with thorns, the mother adds these noble words:—" Would you judge of the lawfulness

or unlawfulness of pleasure, take this rule—whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things,—in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself." "Well," indeed, as Southey observes, "might Wesley consult, upon such a question, a mother who was capable of reasoning and writing thus."

It is generally thought a great and even glorious thing to penetrate the secrets of nature, so as to trace certain obvious effects to their remote or hidden causes; and, without doubt, this is one of the most dignified pursuits in which an intelligent mind can be engaged. But in observing the phenomena of human greatness, it is certainly as dignified, and far more important to ourselves, to ascertain by what means such greatness has been attained. Truths thus brought to light may be laid to account in our own little measure of attainment; and if they do not enable us ever to reach up to the height of greatness, they may certainly aid us in keeping out of the depths of littleness to which we might otherwise have fallen.

One of these discoveries, rendered very clear to my own mind, is the learning what to leave *undone.* In all art, it is of vast importance to know exactly what to leave out. In all knowledge, the understanding what to leave *unlearned* is one great step towards acquiring, with greater certainty, what absolutely must be known. John Wesley, like all men who feel themselves impelled along an arduous course, began early

to realize the importance of making his selection with regard to things which must be learned, and things which might lawfully be left, so as to give place to more urgent and necessary knowledge. He could not afford to fritter away time and strength in learning *all* things; for though evidently unconscious of the direct path which he subsequently felt himself so powerfully called to tread, he had a sort of internal premonition that his work through life must not be regulated by the lower claims and avocations with which men of common minds are satisfied. Not that he was indifferent to general knowledge; his ardent nature would have embraced any honourable pursuit which could have been included in his course of study, and would have reached far beyond the inquiries usually proposed by young men of his age; only that there early dawned upon him that overwhelming demand upon his energies which religious duty presented, and to which all other claims were finally to become subservient. Under these early perplexities with regard to his pursuits, Wesley, as usual, consulted his mother. He had come to the conclusion that life is not long enough for the attainment of universal knowledge, and that, consequently, there were many things of which he must remain satisfied to be ignorant. It is evident he had obtained his mother's approval of this conclusion, for he adds in one of his letters to her,—"I am perfectly come over to your opinion, that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. Curiosity, indeed, might be a sufficient plea for our laying out some time upon them, if we had half-a-dozen centuries of lives to come; but, methinks, it is great ill

husbandry to spend a considerable part of the small pittance now allowed us in what makes us neither a quick nor a sure return."

This presentiment of his own onward course, with the imperative necessity of *making* it onward, in order to satisfy the cravings of his inward nature, was one of the perplexing mysteries to himself which rendered John Wesley remarkably open to the wise counsels of earnest and experienced friends. It was not peculiar to his case that he was in a manner urged or forced onwards by a sense of dissatisfaction with his own condition in a quiescent state. There is reason to believe that all human greatness has been attained, more or less, in this manner. "I distinctly remember," John Wesley said of himself, "that even in my childhood, even when I was at school, I have often said, 'They say the life of a schoolboy is the happiest in the world; but I am sure I am not happy, for I am not content, and so cannot be happy.' When I had lived a few years longer, being in the vigour of youth, a stranger to pain and sickness, and particularly to lowness of spirits (which I do not remember to have felt one quarter of an hour ever since I was born), having plenty of all things, in the midst of sensible and amiable friends who loved me, and I loved them, and being in the way of life which of all others suited my inclinations, still I was not happy. I wondered why I was not, and could not imagine what the reason was. Upon the coolest reflection, I knew not one week which I would have thought it worth while to have lived over again, taking with it every inward and outward sensation, without any variation at all. The reason

was, that I did not then know God, the source of present as well as eternal happiness."

Such was the man who had to seek his satisfaction in active, self-devoted service of a nature which required the entire consecration of heart and mind, with an amount of physical as well as intellectual labour beyond what human strength, except in rare instances, has been found capable of enduring. His was no iron frame either, but finely tempered, in some respects, with more of human feeling and affection than is generally supposed to be associated with such an extraordinary amount of power. The close and confiding intercourse which John Wesley maintained for so many years with his admirable mother, may account for much of this, as well as the candour with which he listened to the truth when not always palatable, owing, in all probability, to the frequency with which such truths had been spoken to him in early life by lips which could not deceive, and which never spoke without uttering the language of the deepest and sincerest affection. No doubt there was, as in the case of Luther, something of antagonism in Wesley's nature, but he seems to have been a man of much calmer and more calculating habits of thought. That he was so open to advice is much to be admired in one of such commanding nature; and that he often recurred to the good advice he had received with deep gratitude is one of the most amiable features of his character. As, for instance, in speaking of Archbishop Potter, Wesley calls him "that great and good man," who gave him advice for which he had ever afterwards occasion to bless God. "If you desire," he had said,

"to be extensively useful, do not spend your time and strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open, notorious vice, and in promoting real essential holiness."

In sketching these features of Wesley's character, we must not forget the share which a mother had in directing the early course of another remarkable man, whose course was often parallel, though sometimes distant from his own. Whitefield also was indebted to the noble resolution of his mother, and perhaps to her discernment in discovering his talents, for the opportunity he enjoyed of cultivating those talents as a poor scholar at Oxford. While the boy was amusing himself, and obtaining a scanty relief from the exigencies of poverty by the acting of plays, and other kinds of buffoonery, in which his wonderful gifts of oratory found a somewhat grotesque mode of exhibition, the mother was looking anxiously into the future for her son. Poor, and almost destitute herself (for while a widow she had married most unhappily), she yet entertained ambitious hopes for him; and hearing one day from a Servitor of Pembroke College that he had so managed as to receive the sum of one penny, after one quarter's expense of his College life had been defrayed, the mother eagerly embraced the hope that her son also might enjoy these advantages, and by her own persevering endeavours, she was able so far to obtain interest for the boy, that at the age of eighteen he was entered as a student at Oxford.

If it is important for us to know of great men how they left out, or laid aside, that which, though good in

itself, was not necessarily *their* good, and consequently might hinder rather than accelerate their onward progress, it is equally if not more instructive to know what were the failures or the downward tendencies from which they had to recover themselves, in order to start afresh, and with renewed vigour and determination, upon their upward course. Although the enemies of John Wesley might have watched in vain for any voluntary transgression on his part of the strictest moral law, yet there was sufficient of the kind of failure alluded to, in the experience of this extraordinary man, to show that he was neither exempt from the common weakness of humanity, nor altogether acquainted with the nature of his own heart. Indeed, he pretended to no such exemption; and whatever pride he had received at the hands of nature, which it must be confessed was no inconsiderable amount, it was not the pride of self-righteousness, nor anything leading to the assumption of a higher tone of purity or innocence than he shared with the poorest sinner whose hopes were hanging, like his own, upon the mercy of God's pardon through his Son. In that portion of Wesley's experience which seems to have been the darkest to his own conceptions, as being most involved in doubt and gloom, he attributes his deliverance to the prayers of his parents, and especially to the prayers of his mother.

To those who judge from external evidence, how ever, there is a period of Wesley's life in which, though he would probably have been far from willing to confess himself in error, it is but too evident that he was strangely misled by the deceptions of his own heart;

and it is worthy of remark that this occurred at a time when he was first removed to so great a distance from his mother, as to prevent the possibility of any immediate intercourse, so that her discerning eye was unable to penetrate the entanglements by which he was surrounded. Indeed, his residence in the West Indies, where he went out with such high hopes of Christian usefulness, must have altogether been a period of humiliating recollections for his after-life; and it is impossible to resist the conviction that what he most wanted there, was his mother's shrewd sense, with her direct and vigorous energies, to preserve him from being first made the dupe of minds less candid and noble than his own, and then from afterwards acting upon mere human feeling, while he believed himself required by his holy calling to exercise the strictest discipline of his office.

In those entangled circumstances where right and wrong are so closely interwoven,—especially where the heart with its warmest emotions is concerned,—there is nothing like the penetrating eye of a clear-sighted and sagacious woman for seeing how to act, provided only that her own heart is entirely out of the question. Hence, in the first attachment which a young man forms, there is no friend so valuable as a mother; and had Wesley, in that distant region of the world, had near him this invaluable friend, he would probably never have had occasion to write in his journal the following expressive words:—"I have often thought that one of the most difficult commands that ever was given, was that given to Ezekiel concerning his wife. But the difficulty of obeying such a

direction appeared to me now more than ever before; when considering the character I bore, I could not but perceive that the word of the Lord was come to me likewise, saying, 'Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, nor shall thy tears run down.'"

The fact was, the lady decided the matter herself in a summary manner; for while he hesitated under the advice of his friends, she chose another husband; and Wesley, instead of shutting the door upon all that had transpired, so far misjudged the promptings of his own heart, as to persecute this not very worthy individual with all the rigours of his ministerial authority, never dreaming that the motives by which he was actuated might not unfairly be attributed to jealousy and wounded pride. For the sake of his dignity, we cannot but regret that Wesley's mother was not by his side; but on the other hand, there is reasonable ground for supposing that, like many of his fellow-beings, he learned more in the school of true wisdom while guilty of one folly, than if his career had remained unchequered by any failure of his own wisdom, or any treachery of his own heart.

With the more important and public concerns of Wesley's life, these notices have no concern. Indeed, this remarkable man is too well known in his highest capacity as the founder of a vast and wonderful institution which has never been equalled in its relations and provisions, or in the skilful organization by which it is held together as a whole. In all this, as well as in his own character as a man and an eminent

preacher, John Wesley is too well known to render any commentary otherwise than obtrusive here. Only, as regards his relatives and home connections, it is remarkable with what faithfulness the brothers and their mother retained the union of strong affection long after they had some of them become widely separated in their religious views, and still more so in the religious course which they believed it their duty to pursue.

In men of such strong will and decided opinions this is much to be admired, and no doubt attributable in great measure to their mother's wise and equal influence over all. As the difference widened between the oldest brother and the two younger, it was some cause for triumph on the part of the latter, that their mother became more lenient and even attached to their peculiar views. Samuel, the oldest, with all the strong sense of the family, and with their strong affections too, appears to have felt this triumph very painfully. In one of his letters he uses this expression:—"Is it not enough that I am bereft of both my brothers, but must my mother follow too?"

Did space permit, there might be found much in the character of Samuel Wesley illustrative of a just title on his part to the distinction of greatness, had not the extraordinary nature of his brother's career in some measure eclipsed the more orthodox and generally approved course which he was contented to pursue. His talents, however, were recognized as being of a high order, such as justly entitled him to take rank with the men of eminence of his time. His poetry, his epigrams, his powers of sarcasm, and his

literary attainments, marked him out in general society as a gentleman, a wit, and a scholar; while on every occasion of family interest, of domestic joy or sorrow, he was one of the first to express himself with that point and cleverness by which so many of his family, and himself in particular, were distinguished. His attachments, too, were warm and indelible. His faithful devotedness to Bishop Atterbury, through the period of his disgrace, was a proof of this, as it stood in the way of his own preferment in the Church. The feelings of his heart are also attested by many of his admirable letters, given in the works of Dr. Adam Clarke. From one of these the following passage is selected, as illustrating the strong confidence he entertained in the principles and integrity of his younger brothers, which he still esteemed, even though subsequently differing from them materially in the religious course which they felt themselves called to pursue. In allusion to some parts of his brothers' conduct, Samuel Wesley says in this letter,—"I cannot say I thought you always in everything right; but I must now say, rather than you and Charles should give over your whole course, I would choose to follow either of you, nay, both of you, to your graves. I cannot advise you better than in the words I proposed for a motto for a pamphlet,—'Stand thou steadfast as a beaten anvil; for it is the part of a good champion to be flayed alive, and to conquer.'"

This was written before Samuel Wesley could possibly have foreseen the extent to which his brothers would deviate from the beaten track of Church discipline and order. Nor indeed is it probable that

those who had that strange course before them knew themselves to what it would lead. Many instances occur of something like what in other men would have been a startled apprehension, on the part of John Wesley himself; only that he seems to have been a man incapable of fear, or rather too strong in the consciousness that the Lord's hand was with him, to suffer the slightest apprehension from any consequences likely to ensue as the result of what he felt it simply right to say or do. That the mother, even in old-age, retained the full force of those clear moral perceptions and that strong moral power which had proved of such inestimable value to the whole family, is shown in an instance of this startling kind which occurred to John Wesley, and which, as usual, he laid before his mother, as he did everything else which either touched his feelings or perplexed his sense of right. And on such occasions it is curious to observe how often those delusions, arising out of human feeling, which not unfrequently obscured the mind of John Wesley, were swept away in a moment by his mother's firm and steady hand.

That Wesley was naturally proud, there is no need to repeat; nor is it anything to his disadvantage—rather the contrary—that humility with him was the result of principle, the evidence of grace. A man of ordinary courage might well have been alarmed at the magnitude of the movement which he had been the instrument of setting in motion, *justly* alarmed at the aspects it soon began to assume, and the agencies, almost uncontrollable by him, which it began to put forth. Amongst these was the rising up of lay

preachers, which Wesley had been far from contemplating or desiring, and which to him, personally, must have appeared obtrusive, if not absolutely fraught with danger. One can easily imagine, too, the feeling secretly allied to contempt with which he must naturally have looked upon the springing up of lesser men to interfere with his popularity as well as his power. Amongst these there was one Maxfield, whose office, appointed by Wesley, had been only to expound. But from that he went on to preaching, and was rapidly obtaining celebrity in that way, when Wesley heard of it; and regarding it as an irregularity, and a thing to be stopped, he went to his mother with marks of evident displeasure on his countenance. On her inquiring the cause he replied, "I find Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher." Mrs. Wesley looked at him seriously, and said,—"John, you know what my sentiments have been; you cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind; but take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself." Wesley, like Loyola, was always ready to correct any part of his conduct or system, as soon as he discovered that it was inconvenient or erroneous. He was too wise a man to be obstinate, and too sincere in all his actions to feel any reluctance at acknowledging that he had been mistaken. He heard Maxfield preach, and expressed at once his satisfaction and his sanction, by saying, "*It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.*"*

* Southey's Life of Wesley.

That a family so numerous, and composed of characters so powerfully constituted as the Wesleys, should grow up from childhood to maturity without their domestic disquietudes, would indeed be beyond the range of probability. Amongst such characters we rather look for deep and heavy trials; and these there were, especially amongst the female members of the family, —close heart-trials, and life-long trials too, arising from ill-assorted marriages, and other causes equally calamitous. The history of some of these would afford illustrations of human life and feeling rich in materials for the most romantic story; while the patient heroism and the deep pathos of the sufferers, often finding expression in the most touching poetical effusions, would fill volumes at once more wonderful and more interesting than are generally devoted to the creations of fiction.

The account given by Adam Clarke of these highly gifted women, with various specimens of their poetry and letters, written sometimes under circumstances of the deepest mental suffering, yet all vigorous, all elevated, all marked by the noblest generosity of heart, is such as to excite a strong desire to know more of their individual history. A slight mention of only one of the sisters may serve to show that they were in some respects far from being degenerate daughters of their admirable mother, while in intellectual powers and attainments they were worthy to rank with their more celebrated brothers.

One of these sisters—Martha, afterwards Mrs. Hale —was honoured by the friendship of Dr. Samuel Johnson, with whom she spent much time, at his own par-

ticular request. "It is no wonder," says Adam Clarke, "that the Doctor valued her conversation. In many cases it supplied the absence of books; her memory was a repository of the most striking events of past centuries, and she had the best parts of all our poets by heart. She delighted in literary discussions and moral argumentations; not for the display, but for the exercise of her mental faculties, and to increase her fund of useful knowledge; and she bore opposition with the same composure as regulated all the other parts of her conduct. . . .

"Of wit, she used to say she was the only one of the family who did not possess it; and one of her brothers used to remark, 'Sister Patty was always too wise to be witty.' Yet she was very capable of acute remark, and at Dr. Johnson's house would sometimes venture upon such as turned the laugh against him, in which he cordially joined, feeling the propriety and force of what she said. . . .

"It was her frequent custom to dwell on the goodness of God in giving his creatures laws, observing that what would have been the inclination of a kind nature, was made a command, that our benevolent Creator might reward it, He thus condescending to prescribe that as a duty which, to a regenerate mind, must have been a wish and delight had it not been prescribed. She loved the name of duties, and ever blessed her gracious Redeemer, who enabled her to discharge them. In a conversation there was a remark made, that the public voice was the voice of truth universally recognized, whence the proverb, *Vox populi, vox Dei.* This Mrs. Hale strenuously contested, and

said the public voice in Pilate's hall was 'Crucify Him! crucify Him!'

"Of her own sufferings Mrs. Hale spoke so little, that they could not be learned from herself. . . . Her blessings, and the advantages which she enjoyed, she was continually recounting. 'Evil,' she used to say, 'was not kept from me, but evil has been kept from harming me.'

"Her manner of reproving sin was so gentle, so evidently the effect of love, that no one was ever known to be offended at it. Young people were so certain of her kindness if they erred, that she was often chosen as a confessor among them."

But with the sisters, as indeed with John Wesley himself, the best part of their characters is exhibited to us now by such exceedingly slight touches, that no justice can be done them by making such memorials still more slight. It is as a whole that we must view the Wesley family, in order to form a proper estimate of the mother's influence over all. John Wesley is remembered at this day as a good man, it is true, but more as a great man, because he was the founder of a great institution. Yet, in alluding to the *best* parts of his character, there is even more pleasure in dwelling upon some of those moral traits which his very greatness has in some measure obscured, than upon his talents or his able and systematic public movements. With the public character of John Wesley—indeed, with so conspicuous a character under any of its more generally recognized aspects—these remarks have little concern. By appropriateness as well as choice they would be directed, did space permit, to his high-toned

and most unselfish liberality, and to his extreme tenderness and consideration for the different members of his own family, even when he might have been pardoned had his attention been absorbed by circumstances and emergencies of a more public nature, at times more pressing and difficult than even those which the military commander is beset with on the field of battle.

Amidst all this, the true heart of the man, the son, the brother, and the friend, is continually gleaming forth, and it is impossible not to feel that with every tender, noble, and generous impulse of this heart, the mother was closely associated. While life remained, this was manifestly the case; and when at last her long and arduous journey through the toils of life was permitted to close in peace, there were traces left upon the hearts and minds of her children, indelible as the virtues she had so studiously laboured to implant.

It may easily be understood, from the state of the times in which they lived, and the circumstances of the Wesley family altogether, that straitness of pecuniary means would be one of their habitual trials. The living of Epworth was one which required the strictest economy for the maintenance of so large a household; and Mrs. Wesley, with all her high intellectual attainments, her reading, and the many letters and other papers upon which she must have bestowed a vast amount of time and thought, never neglected those domestic avocations, upon the punctual discharge of which depended the comfort and respectability of those whose interests were ever nearest to her heart.

A popular German writer has justly said that "where

there is no economy, there can be no true liberality." The Wesleys could deny themselves in order to assist others. Rigid in the narrow rule of their self-indulgence, they seem to have vied with each other in that noble generosity which refuses not to supply the necessities of waywardness and error, as well as the more gratifying claims of honourable but suffering family connections. The mother of the Wesleys was herself a noble instance of this kind of generosity; and her oldest son, Samuel, was no less remarkable than his younger brother for extending to every member of the family who might be benefited by his help, such assistance as his own means afforded.

"A part of Samuel Wesley's character," says Adam Clarke, "of which the world knew nothing, was the brightest, and the most worthy of imitation of every son and brother. From the time he became usher in Westminster School, he divided his income with his parents and family. Through him, principally, were his brothers John and Charles maintained at the university; and in all straits of the family his purse was not only opened, but emptied, if found necessary. And all this was done with so much affection and deep sense of duty, that it took off and almost prevented the burden of gratitude which otherwise must have been felt. These acts of filial kindness were done so secretly, that, although they were very numerous, and extended through many years, no note of them is to be found in his correspondence; his right hand never knew what his left hand did."

Upon John Wesley afterwards devolved the maintenance of many of his family in circumstances of com-

fort and respectability. With him his mother found a peaceful home during the last years of her widowed life. In the year 1742 he records in his journal—"I left Bristol on the evening of Sunday, July 18th, and came to London, where I found my mother on the borders of eternity; but she had no doubts nor fear, nor any desire, but as soon as God should call, 'to depart and be with Christ.'

"Friday, 23d.—About three in the afternoon I went to see my mother, and found her change was near. . . . Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern, and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little while before she lost her speech—'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'

"Sunday, August 1st.—Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her fathers. The portion of Scripture from which I afterwards spoke was, 'I saw a great white throne, and Him that sate on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see, on this side eternity."

X.

THE MOTHER OF NAPOLEON.

WITHOUT attempting in any way to enter upon the public career of Napoleon Buonaparte, or even to discuss the more prominent features of a character which has become too well known to admit of more than a passing comment here, it may afford perhaps more than a mere momentary interest, to glance back to the early formation of that character, under the influence of a mother as remarkable for her heroism as for some other qualities not quite so much to be admired.

"Letitia Ramolini, the mother of Napoleon, was born at Ajaccio, on the 24th of August, 1750. In the midst of civil discord, skirmishes, and fights, she was married to Charles Buonaparte, ere she had completed her sixteenth year. She was one of the most beautiful young women of her day, and as such was celebrated throughout the island of Corsica." *

Whether owing to the unsettled and warlike condition of her country, or to the fervour of her own Corsican blood, this beautiful woman appears to have acted the part of a fearless heroine, so far as to follow her

* Court and Camp of Buonaparte.

husband in his dangerous journeys; riding by his side, and sharing all the perils which at that time endangered the property and the lives of all who took part in the public affairs of the island. With a fine constitution of body, she possessed a firm undaunted soul, always daring to do what her strong will or her sense of duty prompted; and not only exemplifying in her own person those high virtues which belong to magnanimity, but enforcing by a rigid and almost Spartan discipline the same virtues in others.

It is a curious fact, and not unworthy of poetic illustration, that the hero of so many battles was born under circumstances which admitted of no provision being made for the event beyond a temporary couch prepared for his mother, over which was hung a canopy of tapestry representing the heroes of the Iliad. A fancy pleased with the task of unravelling that tissue of association out of which human tendencies and motives are woven, might amuse itself with expatiating upon this omen of the young hero's adventurous career. But sober reason would dwell more upon the previous preparation of the youthful mother in the adverse circumstances to which, owing to the state of her country, she had become inured, and the dangers and fatigues which she had learned to endure without complaining.

The Duchess d'Abrantes, in her sketches of the different characters who acted their various parts in the court and camp of Napoleon, gives the following account of the manner in which the mother of the Emperor used to describe this period of her life, first placing the picture before us of a pale but earnest-

looking woman, who, after speaking of anything which interested her deeply, sat with compressed lips and wide open eyes, an image of firmness of purpose combined with depth of feeling.

"That very day," says the writer of this curious journal, "I had occasion to remark the maternal tenderness of Madame Letitia. We had no other company, and she conversed for hours with my mother with greater freedom than she had yet done since her arrival from Corsica. They both began to recall the days of youth. Madame Buonaparte was quite at ease, because with us she spoke nothing but Italian. I recollect she this day told us, that being at mass on the day of the Fête of Notre Dame of August, she was overtaken with the pains of childbirth, and she had hardly reached home, when she was delivered of Napoleon on a wretched rug. Previous to his birth she had experienced many misfortunes; for when the French entered Corsica, many of the principal families, and among them that of Buonaparte, were compelled to fly. They assembled at the foot of Monte-Rotondo, the highest mountain in Corsica. In their flight and during their sojourn among the mountains they underwent many hardships."

"Madame Mère had often talked over these events before, but the recital never interested me so powerfully as on the 8th of November, when the space of six years had rendered so different the situation of those very children whom she, a lone feeble woman, had been forced to hurry away beyond the reach of the proscription, carrying the youngest in her arms, when, overcome by fatigue, they could no longer walk, and

ultimately embarking with them in a frail vessel, and landing on a shore which increased their dangers. In recording this period of her life, the looks of Madame Buonaparte were as handsome as her language was eloquent."

The same writer has described the mother of Napoleon, as being in her youth one of the handsomest women in Corsica. Even later in life this writer says,—"Her soul beamed in her looks, and it was a soul full of the loftiest sentiments." Madame Buonaparte is further described as being of a high and elevated character. "A widow at an early age, in a country where the head of a family is everything, the young mother had found it necessary to call up all the energy of her character. She was gifted with that delicacy of perception which distinguishes the Corsicans, but in her this quality did not degenerate into hypocrisy. . . . Indeed, she was habitually candid."

The true dignity of this remarkable character is still more strikingly brought before us by this writer when describing the appearance of Madame Letitia at a subsequent period. "The revolution of the 8th was completed, and Paris was no longer agitated. We went to see Madame Letitia Buonaparte, who then lived with Joseph. She appeared calm, though far from being at ease, for her extreme paleness, and the convulsive movements she evinced whenever an unexpected noise met her ear, gave her features a ghastly air. In these moments she appeared to me truly like the mother of the Gracchi. And her situation added force to the idea; she had perhaps more at stake than that famous Roman matron!"

Such is the dignified figure we have to contemplate in idea, after the beauty of the brave Corsican girl has faded, and after those days of enterprise had long passed in which she used to ride with her husband sometimes in his midnight expeditions, little dreaming of that strange and eventful future which was preparing for her children.

Charles Buonaparte, the father of Napoleon, died in 1785, of the same disease as that which proved fatal to his son. While at St. Helena, Napoleon described the circumstances of his father's death, adding the following suggestive particulars:—"A circumstance connected with this melancholy event struck me very forcibly. My father, who was far from being religiously inclined, and who had even composed some anti-religious poetry, no sooner saw the grave half opened, than he became passionately fond of priests. He wished for them, called for them; there were not priests enough in Montpellier to satisfy him."

His widow was left at the age of thirty-five with five sons and three daughters, her children having been thirteen in all. Long before her husband's death, however, Madame Letitia had exercised almost undisputed authority over her children; and according to her son's account, with her rested the stern duty of punishment for their faults. Their father, though a man of sense, was too fond of pleasure to interfere in what could not always be a pleasant or an easy task, and the family were therefore left almost entirely to maternal government.

Napoleon describes his own infancy as quarrelsome and mischievous. But in the disputes and the con-

flicts which followed as a natural consequence, he says, "I had need to be on the alert; our mother would have repressed my warlike humour, she would not have put up with my caprices. Her tenderness was joined with severity: she punished, rewarded, all alike; the good, the bad, nothing escaped her. . . . She did indeed watch over us with a solicitude unexampled. Every low sentiment, every ungenerous affection was discarded, discouraged; she suffered nothing but what was grand and elevated to take root in our youthful understandings. She abhorred falsehood, was provoked by disobedience: she passed over none of our faults."

In describing the death of an uncle, upon whose care the children were to some extent dependent, Napoleon goes on to say: "He then made us draw near, and gave us his blessing and advice. 'You are the eldest of the family,' he said to Joseph; 'but Napoleon is the head of it. Take care to remember what I say to you.' He then expired amidst the sobs and tears which this melancholy sight drew from us. Left without guide, without support, my mother was obliged to take the direction of affairs upon herself. But the task was not above her strength: she managed everything, provided for everything, with a prudence and sagacity which could neither have been expected from her sex, nor from her age. Oh! what a woman!—Where look for her equal?" *

It is evident from different traits of character described as belonging to the mother of Napoleon, that she also found the exercise of her natural tendencies

* Hazlitt's History of Napoleon.

in commanding or governing. There were, however, many other circumstances connected with the early life of the Emperor which must have exercised considerable influence in fostering that element of resistance which constituted so prominent a feature in his after-experience. Born and nurtured on the theatre of strife, the earliest impressions made upon his mind must have been those of warfare and peril. His favourite plaything is said to have been a brass cannon, long exhibited to travellers visiting the place as a precious relic.

The description of what was once the summer residence of the family, as given by Sir Walter Scott, would indeed suggest ideas of a more peaceful and contemplative nature. "Going along the seashore from Ajaccio towards the Isle Sanguinière, about a mile from the town, occur two stone pillars, the remains of a doorway, leading up to a dilapidated villa, once the residence of Madame Buonaparte's half-brother on the mother's side, whom Napoleon created Cardinal Fesch. The house is approached by an avenue, surrounded and overhung by the cactus and other shrubs, which luxuriate in a warm climate. It has a garden and a lawn, showing, amidst neglect, vestiges of their former beauty, and the house is surrounded by shrubberies, now permitted to run to wilderness. This was the summer residence of Madame Buonaparte and her family. Almost enclosed by the wild olive, the cactus, the clematis, and the almond-tree, is a very singular and isolated granite rock, called Napoleon's grotto, which seems to have resisted the decomposition which has taken place

around. The remains of a small summer-house are visible beneath the rock, the entrance to which is nearly closed by a luxuriant fig-tree. This was Buonaparte's frequent retreat, when the vacations of the school at which he studied permitted him to visit home. How the imagination labours to form an idea of the visions, which, in this sequestered and romantic spot, must have arisen before the eyes of the hero of a hundred battles!" *

From this beautiful retreat the family were driven, and finally from the island, by the disturbances which took place in the year 1793. "When Paoli manifested his determination to surrender Corsica to the English, the Buonaparte family continued to head the French party, and had the fatal honour of being threatened with a march of the inhabitants; that is to say, they were attacked by a levy *en masse*. Several thousand peasants made a descent from the mountains on Ajaccio. The house occupied by the family was pillaged, and their vines and flocks destroyed. Napoleon, who happened at that time to be on a visit to his mother, as well as his brothers Joseph and Lucien, were subjected to a decree of banishment from their native land; and Madame Buonaparte, with her three daughters, and Jerome, as yet a child, set sail under their protection. They first settled at Nice, and afterwards at Marseilles; where the family is supposed to have undergone, for a time, the severest inconveniences of poverty."

The school life of Napoleon, though in some respects flattering to his ambition, was occasionally

* Sir Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon.

damped by circumstances of the deepest mortification. The governor of Corsica had obtained for him an appointment to the military school at Brienne; where, as stated by Sir Walter Scott, "the conduct of the young Napoleon among his companions was that of a studious and reserved youth, addicting himself deeply to the means of improvement, and rather avoiding than seeking the usual temptations to dissipation of time. He had few friends, and no intimates; yet at different times, when he chose to exert it, he exhibited considerable influence over his fellow-students, and when there was any joint plan to be carried into effect, he was frequently chosen dictator of the little republic.

"Notwithstanding the external calmness and reserve of his deportment, he who was destined for such great things had, while yet a student at Brienne, a full share of that ambition for distinction, and dread of disgrace, that restless and irritating love of fame, which is the spur to extraordinary attempts. Sparkles of this keen temper sometimes showed themselves. On one occasion, a harsh superintendent imposed on the future emperor, for some trifling fault, the disgrace of wearing a penitential dress, and being excluded from the table of the students, and obliged to eat his meal apart. His pride felt the indignity so severely, that it brought on a severe nervous attack, to which, though otherwise of good constitution, he was subject upon occasions of extraordinary irritation.

"It is said that an early disposition to the popular side distinguished Buonaparte even when at Brienne. Pichegru, afterwards so celebrated, who acted as his

monitor in the military school, bore witness to his early principles, and to the peculiar energy and tenacity of his temper. Long afterwards he was consulted whether means might not be found to engage the commander of the Italian armies in the royal interest. 'It will be but lost time to attempt it,' said Pichegru. 'I knew him in his youth: his character is inflexible—he has taken his side, and he will not change it.'"

While under the usual age for such promotion, Napoleon was selected by the inspector of the military schools, to be sent to Paris for the completion of his education. Ambition under various forms from this time began to fill the mind of the young aspirant for fame. At one time his efforts took a literary turn; but circumstances, as well as the natural bent of his own character, threw him into that career of active conflict in which he soon found his true element.

Had the surrounding influences of early life been those of ease and luxury, it is scarcely possible that they would ever have matured a character like that of Napoleon, or like that of his mother. That a lasting and ineffaceable sympathy remained between them is one of the most agreeable features we meet with in studying the life of the emperor. The very faults of the mother seem never to have alienated the affection of the son; nor indeed could they reasonably have done so in his case, since those very faults were so often made subservient to her deep and faithful devotion to his interests. There was probably much in the character of Madame Letitia which the emperor could have admired independently of her near relationship. He

was accustomed to say of her that she had "the head of a man upon the shoulders of a woman." In all respects he did her noble justice, never allowing the memory of their past struggles to become effaced from his mind. "When left," to use his own words, "without a guide or protector, she was compelled to take upon herself the direction of affairs; and the burden was not too much for her strength. She administered everything with a degree of sagacity not to be expected from her age and sex."

"Upon the first flush of good fortune, Napoleon, whose attachment to his mother was ever conspicuous, did not fail to assign a portion of his gains to the use of Madame Letitia, who thus found herself raised on a sudden from a state of comparative indigence to one of ease and comfort. Shortly after the revolution of 1799, by which Napoleon was placed at the head of the consular government, Madame Buonaparte removed with her children to Paris, where she lived in the most retired manner; nor was it until, in 1804, when her son was proclaimed emperor, that the public attention was directed towards her. She then received the title of Madame Mère, and had an income of a million of francs settled upon her. And in order to invest her with a position of political importance, she was made *Protectrice Générale* of all the charitable institutions of France—an office well befitting the mother of the sovereign." *

It is impossible to do justice to the mother of Napoleon without alluding to that tendency evinced to *economize*, even on the most trifling occasions, which

* Court and Camp of Napoleon.

proved a source of frequent amusement amongst the gay circles of Paris. The emperor himself is said to have been at times a little scandalized by her personal habits; but even this could not alienate his affections, nor does it seem ever to have interfered with the high respect which he entertained for her character. Indeed, with the exception of this failing, Madame Letitia appears to have been a woman of that true dignity of mind which understands equally what to render and what to require; and much as she might venerate the emperor, she never forgot that, as a son, he was bound to venerate his mother.

"On many occasions Madame Letitia proved herself a woman of extraordinary vigour of mind, joined to a considerable amount of pride and loftiness of spirit. Shortly after Napoleon's assumption of the imperial purple, happening to meet his mother in the gardens of St. Cloud, he, half-playfully, half-seriously, presented her his hand to kiss. She flung it back indignantly, and tendering her own, exclaimed, in the presence of his suite, "It is your duty to kiss the hand of her who gave you life!" *

Many curious instances are recorded of Madame Letitia's love of hoarding; for which, however, she had, or thought she had, her own sufficient reasons. Indeed, it is impossible to calculate the extent to which her own mind may have been early impressed by circumstances with convictions of the uncertainty of that success which her sons had so unexpectedly attained. To the mother who had watched over their deserted childhood; who had learned, in her widowed state,

* Court and Camp of Buonaparte.

what it was to have scarcely any human friend on whom she could depend for advancing her sons in the career of worldy distinction; and who, with her young family around her, had experienced all the anxieties of being driven from her native country, and cast upon a world of strangers—to her there must have appeared but an uncertain foundation for confidence in the sudden and unprecedented exaltation of her sons. And then, "if reverses should come!"—who can wonder, with this experience so deeply impressed upon her memory, that her imagination should have been haunted with apprehensions, which in their mode of exhibition appeared to those who were but superficial observers, something like the manifestations of an amusing kind of mental aberration. Under these impressions she is said to have replied to those who remonstrated with her for her parsimony,—"Who knows but I may one day have to provide bread for all these kings!"

But this peculiarity of Madame Letitia's can the more easily be forgiven, when it is remembered how faithful and unceasing were the efforts she employed for serving the interests of her sons; and especially how liberal were her offers of assistance when the tide of fortune had set against them. "When all her sons except one were seated on thrones, she was unceasing in her applications to the most powerful of them, on behalf of Lucien. On being one day told by Napoleon, that she loved Lucien more than she did the rest of her family,—'The child,' she replied, 'of whom I am the most fond, is always the one that happens to be the most unfortunate.' To the truth of this assertion Napoleon, a few years after, bore ready and ample testimony."

"Having alluded to Madame Letitia's prominent failing, it would be unjust not to add, that she took delight in offices of kindness. Often called on to solicit her son to confer a favour, or repair an injury, she was happy whenever her exertions were crowned with success, and would herself hasten to announce to the parties the result of her application on their behalf.

"On being informed by Josephine of the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien, she flew to the Tuileries, where she made use of all the authority over the First Consul which a mother might be supposed to possess, and even threw herself on her knees, imploring mercy for the unfortunate prince. She was highly dissatisfied with Napoleon's treatment of the Pope at Fontainebleau, and would say to her brother, Cardinal Fesch, 'Your nephew, by pursuing this course, will ruin himself, and us too. He should stop where he is: by grasping too much, he will lose all. I have my alarms for the whole family, and think it right to provide against a rainy day!'" *

After Napoleon had been banished to Elba, his mother with a few attendants followed him, and took up her residence there; but on his escape she removed to Rome, where the remainder of her life was spent. From the earliest period of his reverses, the mother's heart, with all its warmest affections, became especially centred in the son. She had often reproved him for his pride and ambition in the days of his prosperity, and at that time she was perhaps the only friend in existence from whose lips he heard the truth; but from the time of his overthrow at Waterloo, to the day of his

* Court and Camp of Buonaparte.

death, her true woman's heart never swerved from this one object of all her deepest and most absorbing interests. Again and again she offered him all that she possessed in the world, to assist in the re-establishment of his affairs. "For me," said Napoleon, in his last exile, when memories of the past so often filled his mind, "my mother would without a murmur have doomed herself to live on brown bread. Loftiness of sentiment still reigned paramount in her breast; pride and noble ambition were not yet subdued by avarice."

"Of all that Napoleon had said at St. Helena respecting his mother, Count Las Cases, on his return to Europe, witnessed the literal fulfiment. No sooner had he detailed the story of the ex-emperor's situation, than the answer returned by the courier was, that her whole fortune was at her son's disposal. In October, 1818, she addressed an affecting appeal to the allied sovereigns, assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, on his behalf: 'Sires,' said she, 'I am a mother, and my son's life is dearer to me than my own. In the name of Him whose essence is goodness, and of whom your imperial and royal majesties are the image, I entreat you to put a period to his misery, and to restore him to liberty. For this, I implore God and I implore you, who are his vicegerents on earth. Reasons of state have their limits; and posterity, which gives immortality, adores above all things the generosity of conquerors.' Again, in 1819, Napoleon having expressed his determination not to permit the visits of an English physician, and his desire to have the company of a Catholic priest, his mother cheerfully defrayed the expenses of sending to St. Helena a mission, both physical and spiritual, of

persons selected by her brother Cardinal Fesch, with the approbation of the Pope." *

This remarkable woman lived until nearly her eightieth year, still retaining much of her beauty of person, and extraordinary vigour of mind. Those who have studied her admirable contour of features, in that beautiful work of art, her bust, by Canova, will not readily forget the purity and dignity by which they are characterized; and those who study the development of feeling and affection, when associated with the sterner and grander attributes of human nature, will regard it as no mean tribute to the dignity of women, to have been loved and honoured as Napoleon Buonaparte loved and reverenced his mother.

* Court and Camp of Buonaparte.

XI.

THE MOTHER OF COWPER.

THE evidence of what can be done, and of what has been accomplished by maternal influence, would scarcely appear under the most striking aspect, without some evidence on the other hand of how much the character and destiny of even highly gifted men may suffer from the want of a mother's influence, and perhaps still more from the abuse of it.

It is a melancholy thing to contemplate this want under any circumstances, but especially so where the naturally sensitive or morbid tendency of the character renders it shrinking and averse from the interference of man; and yet where it is far removed, by the severing of maternal ties, from the more tender sympathy, and hence more acceptable interference of woman.

Such must always be the case to some extent when a boy is deprived of this natural outlet for his feelings by the death of his mother. A girl can much more readily find other friends and confidants. From whatever quarter tenderness and sympathy approach her, she will learn, from the very necessity of her own being, not only to receive them with a cordial wel-

come, but also to yield a ready and a warm response. But a boy cannot easily do either. He prefers to isolate himself,—to shut his feelings close within his heart, where they burn and smoulder without emitting light, or receiving nourishment. Women in general are nothing, can be nothing to him, until the time when he begins to look upon them with other eyes than those of childhood. There is but one woman in the whole world who can be to a boy exactly what he wants, and that woman is his mother. Most pitiable then is the young heart of an affectionate boy who has early lost his mother.

A kind and excellent father may do everything which is possible for him, to bring himself into close and entire acquaintance with his son; and the son may long to lay bare his heart before his father. A father may even think that he actually knows his son. But it may be only thinking after all; for the boy may carry, deep within his inexperienced nature, a kind of inner being—sources of feeling, and motives of action which he dare not or cannot wholly submit to the probing hand of any man. Even his boyish acquaintances—friends of his own age, and of similar habits and attainments, often do not know him as he really is, because they cannot penetrate, nor would he permit them to do so, that inner being from whence his real character in after-life will spring.

When a boy is so highly gifted as to be peculiarly brilliant or successful, he wants his mother to rejoice in his glory, because he knows that her rejoicing would be sincere. When he is particularly dull, or finds learning very difficult, he wants his mother to give

him a little secret encouragement, or perhaps a little private help. When he is affectionate, he wants his mother, because he can love her without shame. When he has done wrong, he wants to weep the tears of penitence upon his mother's breast; and when he would begin to lift his trembling soul to God, he wants his mother to teach him how to pray. Above all, when, half man, half boy, a new existence dawns upon him, and temptations within as well as without lead him on to make experiments of untried fields of action, he wants his mother to confide in; and from her alone, perhaps, of all the world, will he bear to be warned or reprimanded, if he has gone too far, or ventured to set his foot upon the path of sin.

Again, all boys are not so bold by nature as they desire to be. Constitutional causes often militate against the exercise of undaunted courage. Some are physically bold, who want moral courage; and some are bold for conscience' sake, whose physical structure prevents the possibility of personal daring being ever a matter of enjoyment. Some, unfortunately for them, are sensitive as girls, perhaps more so; yet having to fight as men on the battle-field of life, would fain discover some proof-armour wherewith to shield themselves in the rude conflict from what they know will have to be endured in the mere contact with coarse natures, even should they be so happy as to escape the censure of malice, or the contempt of pride.

When the sensitive boy thus circumstanced becomes feelingly alive to his position, to whom is he to go for help? Not surely to those who would ridicule his weakness, and make light of his distress, because they

themselves have never known any experience like his. Those who see no danger where we see too much, and have never felt the pain we are enduring, are the last persons to inspire us with courage in the hour of peril, or to inspire us with patience under suffering. No; it is from one who perceives, understands, and thoroughly appreciates the danger which is before us, that we learn to dare it as it is; and from one who bears actual and evident suffering like our own with bravery, that we learn to be brave ourselves. Hence the advantage to a boy of close and affectionate association with the inner soul of a brave woman, who can speak of peril under its true form, because she has felt, and yet dared to meet it; and who can speak of suffering with tender sympathy, because she has known some of its keenest pangs, yet has borne herself with true heroism in the midst of pain, as well as danger. There is, in fact, no real courage in being insensible to fear, nor in having never seen danger; but rather in seeing and even fearing the utmost possible calamity, and then, after calculating probabilities, daring to do what has to be done, as if no danger were present.

The poet Cowper was not afraid to lash the follies of society from behind the shades of his peaceful and secluded life. But there was something in his physical, as well as mental constitution, which rendered it excruciating agony for him to meet the same society face to face upon the broad unsheltered arena of public activity and strife. From the portraits of the poet, and particularly one at Pansanger, the seat of Earl Cowper, it is painfully evident that a man so constituted must have suffered almost at every pore. That

he would, under any circumstances, have fallen a victim to the physical malady which at times overpowered his reason, there is ground for supposing. Yet, on the other hand, it is scarcely possible not to entertain the belief that much suffering might have been spared him, if not the first attack altogether warded off, had he known in early youth, and especially on first entering upon the real business of public life, what it was to enjoy the confidence of a tender, faithful, and judicious mother.

It is true we might in that case never have known anything of Cowper as a poet. He might then have found a more active, and perhaps more health-imparting channel for the exercise of his natural talents. We may even say of him with more than usual confidence, that all is well as it has been ordered, because we believe that "through much tribulation" he has long since entered into his eternal rest; yet even at this day it is impossible to read his history, and especially those touching allusions to his painful malady which abound in his letters, without yearning over his sensitive and somewhat isolated youth, accompanied with regrets, perhaps more tender than wise, that he had not been permitted for a few years longer to enjoy the high privilege of such companionship as that of his mother would naturally have been to him.

Humanly speaking, no man ever lived and suffered who needed a kind and judicious mother more than Cowper. But as we sometimes find the most picturesque and graceful tree indebted for the peculiarity of its form, and the beauty which it consequently adds

to the landscape, to some early injury, perhaps to the tenderest portion of the leading stem, so has there been many an outpouring of the wounded spirit from which mankind have derived a lasting fund of pleasure and instruction, which has owed its existence to some disadvantage of circumstance, some cruelty inflicted, or hurt received in early life, which has prevented the full development of the plant according to the accustomed forms under which health and vigour are most frequently manifested.

It is generally supposed that children remember what has occurred to them so far back as the third or fourth years of their lives. Some may do this; but there is a great difference in how and what children remember; because there is a great difference in their mode of receiving impressions from what they see, hear, or feel. Thus a child may distinctly remember the mother who died when it was less than five years old; but for all the distinguishing traits of that mother's character, it is entirely indebted to information subsequently obtained.

William Cowper, the oldest of two surviving sons, was six years old when he lost his mother, in the year 1737; and it is evident from his own beautiful lines on receiving her picture many years afterwards, that the traces remaining in his memory were only such as a very juvenile mind would be likely to retain. Amongst these, the great event of her death, with the sad and novel scenes by which the funeral was accompanied, stand out most prominently; and indeed they were likely to have produced a deeper impression than even those offices of kindness which he also records,

because the latter would be so familiar, and so often repeated from the earliest moments of existence, as to become scarcely more noticeable than the sunshine of each passing day, the blue sky overhead, or the fields and the flowers beneath. But the great event, shrouded in mystery to the child, with all the gloom and the sorrow of the strangely awful occasion, was but too well remembered.

> "I heard the bell tolled on the burial day,
> I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
> And, turning from my nursery window, drew
> A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

According to the poet's own date, upwards of fifty years must have elapsed from the day when he stood as a child gazing from the window on the funeral procession, to the time of his receiving the picture from his cousin, whom he addresses as his "dearest Rose." And then, with that sweet playfulness by which his admirable letters are so often diversified, he dwells upon the word,—"My dearest Rose, whom I thought withered and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive. . . . Every creature that bears any affinity to my mother is dear to me; and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her. I love you, therefore, and love you much, both for her sake and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original pre-

sented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I completed my sixth year; yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember, too, a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne* than the Cowper; and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought in the days of my childhood much to resemble my mother; and in my natural temper, of which, at the age of fifty-eight, I must be supposed to be a competent judge, I can trace both her and my late uncle, your father: somewhat of his irritability; and a little, I would hope, both of his and of her—I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention; but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good nature*. Add to this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, that whatever I am, I love you all."

It is a great satisfaction, in reading the life of Cowper, and especially his letters, to believe, from what we find there, that he really enjoyed almost an average

* Cowper's mother was the daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall, Norfolk.

share of happiness after all; though alternating with seasons of such intense mental suffering, that only when we overlook that genial affection which was the light of his existence, and which is seldom unreturned; when we overlook his peaceful exemption from worldly strife; his lively appreciation of the charms of nature, as well as of the refined and social courtesies of life; above all, when we overlook that goodness of heart which is its own reward, and that spiritual converse with happy and holy beings, which is the privilege of those who seek their enjoyment in loving and serving God,—it is only then that we look upon Cowper as the most afflicted and unfortunate of men. There have not been wanting some who have ascribed his seasons of mental suffering to something gloomy and fanatical in the nature of his religious views. But is it not more reasonable to suppose that such constitutional tendency to melancholy would seize upon the darkest and most discouraging aspects of religion, as well as of everything connected with the inmost feelings of the soul? A mind in such a state was, in fact, capable of admitting no other views where religion was the subject of consideration. It was incapable of hope. And with strong religious convictions utterly divested of all hope, what is there left but horror and despair?

Of those who are disposed to blame Cowper's religion for his unhappiness, it might be asked, what would he have been without it? In all probability the victim of some suicidal act. And then, in the cessation of each attack, what was there but religion to soothe and heal a wounded spirit so gentle and so

sensitive as his? What was it, in reality, but his religion, which made him at other times so cheerful and so happy a man, so warm in his affections, so benevolent in his kindly feelings, so refined in his enjoyments, and so exalted as well as pure in all the aspirations of his gentle but noble spirit?

But even admitting that religion was almost more to Cowper than to other men, it is impossible not to lean towards the belief that the support and the consolation derived from this source might, according to human calculation, have been attained with less suffering, had there been a kind and judicious mother to watch over and direct the tendencies of the poet's character in the early stages of his experience. Passing over one of those youthful attachments which fall in with the usual course of human life, but which, in his case, must have especially required the judicious intervention of some female friend, we find him under his first great effort, about to step into the arena of public life, trembling on the verge of madness, from causes which none but a mother could have fully understood. Most men would have exulted in the opportunity which then lay before him of pushing his fortunes, as people are wont to call it. But between exultation and despair there is often a very narrow step, down which those whose nature is too sensitive are apt to slip, even at the very crisis when success might have been secured by one bold onward movement. Nor is it those alone who are incapable of ambition, or who do not estimate the full value of success, who are apt to take this backward step at the most critical moment. There is such a thing as a

high ambition, and a high estimate of excellence of every kind; nay, even a burning desire to advance towards victory or success, accompanied by a kind of inward trembling and doubt, sometimes amounting to absolute terror, which is proportioned in its intensity to those exalted aspirations with which it alternates.

Who is there capable of dealing with these strange contradictions of our nature, but woman—kind, sympathizing, hoping, trusting woman? To the generality of men they are either beneath attention, or totally incomprehensible. Yet many a schoolboy, in his first great public examination, has felt something of this. But then the very memory of such a sensation must be ignored by men in their own experience, and only recognized as a subject for ridicule in the experience of others.

There are, as we all know, occasions on which ridicule is the greatest cruelty; and this state of alternation betwixt ambition and despair is one. It is like heaping hot ashes on the head, while torture lacerates the limbs. Women are quick to perceive when the suffering mind can bear no more, when the agitated feelings require soothing rather than stimulating; and when the balance of reason, as well as satisfaction, requires the total re-adjustment of a skilful and delicate hand.

Cowper, though well advanced in manhood, was but young in experience of the active conflict incident to public life, when this terrible arresting of his mental and physical exertions first took place. He had no one then to whom he could confide the morbid

apprehensions to which his mind became a prey, or he might probably never have had to record those deeply affecting descriptions of his own sufferings, with which his letters abound. "Dazzled," he says, "by the splendid proposal, and not immediately reflecting upon my incapacity to execute a business of so public a nature, I at once accepted it; but at the same time (such was the will of Him whose hand was in the whole matter), seemed to receive a dagger in my heart. The wound was given, and every moment added to the smart of it. All the considerations by which I endeavoured to compose my mind to its former tranquillity, did but torment me the more, proving miserable comforters and counsellors of no value. I returned to my chambers thoughtful and unhappy; my countenance fell; and my friend was astonished, instead of that additional cheerfulness he might so reasonably expect, to find an air of deep melancholy in all I said or did."

Again, when describing the condition of deeper misery which ensued, he says, "I felt myself pressed by necessity on either side, with nothing but despair in prospect. . . . In this situation, such a fit of passion has sometimes seized me, when alone in my chambers, that I have cried out aloud, and cursed the hour of my birth, lifting up my eyes to heaven at the same time, not as a suppliant, but in the spirit of reproach and blasphemy against my Maker. A thought would sometimes come across my mind, that my sins had perhaps brought this distress upon me, that the hand of Divine vengeance was in it; but in the pride of my heart I presently acquitted myself, and thereby impiously

charged God with injustice, saying, 'What sins have I committed to deserve this?'"

We see here that the wretched sufferer was rapidly approaching to a condition of absolute madness, upon which it is alike painful and unnecessary to dwell. We rather trace, one step farther, the manifestation of that yearning for female sympathy and companionship which seems to have characterized the whole of his life, and which would most probably have found its entire satisfaction in the society of a mother, who could have understood the peculiarities of his morbid constitution of body as well as mind, and who might possibly, by her judicious treatment, have imparted more of health and vigour to both.

Poor "stricken deer!" It is not difficult to imagine some of the sensations with which he must have looked upon the world again after the first dark cloud had passed. His world, however, was at that time, happily for him, clothed in a very retired and peaceful aspect. His habitation he believed to have been chosen for him by the appointment of a kind Providence, exactly where he should meet with such a friend as his feeble constitution and already shattered nerves so much required. This friend was Mary Unwin, a lady justly celebrated now as having inspired so lasting and so pure a friendship, and as being "the poet's prop and stay—his affectionate nurse and beloved friend for more than thirty years of his life;" of whom he speaks as "a lady who supplied to me the place of my own mother—my own invaluable mother." After six-and-twenty years of this companionship, the poet sang—

"Mary! I want a lyre with other strings;
Seek aid from heaven, as some have feigned they drew!
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
And undebased by praise of meaner things!

"That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth, with honour due,
In verse as beautiful as thou art true—
Verse that immortalizes whom it sings!

"But thou hast little need. There is a book,
By seraphs writ; with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look;
A chronicle of actions just and bright!

"There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine."

XII.

THE MOTHER OF LORD BYRON.

We have now to consider the position of youth under disadvantages still greater than those which attended the early years of the poet Cowper. A mother lost in childhood is universally allowed to be one of the heaviest calamities which can attend our earthly lot. But a mother inattentive or insensible to the duties of a mother, is far worse. A woman ungoverned herself, can never be capable of rightly governing others; capricious herself, she can never be consistent in her discipline; irrational herself, she can never exercise that influence which, to be of any value, must have its foundation in reason and right principle.

If it is a melancholy task to contemplate the motherless youth of Cowper, it is much more so to watch the early steps by which Byron trod his wayward course, untaught by any human being how to make his life acceptable to God or happy to himself—untaught in all those higher offices of genius by which things holy, just, and true are represented under the noblest and most attractive forms.

All who have been favourites with the public, have

had to pay dearly for that privilege in the extreme and often false estimates formed of their worth, as well as their capabilities. Wherever the tide of popularity has overflowed the bounds of reason, it ebbs back again to a proportionate extent; and thus, after the brilliant career of Byron as a poet had won for him an excess of homage, the tide of public opinion went backwards until the fascination by which he had enchained such multitudes of admirers gave place to reflections even more censorious than just; and he whose very name had once been like music falling on our ears was called selfish, egotistical, and many other odious things, which had been scarcely heeded while his popularity was at its height.

Indeed, it is a little curious now to call to mind the different aspects under which the worst traits of Byron's character were regarded, when admiration of his genius was the warmest and loudest; and when that admiration had lost its fervour and become silent. It is true the genius itself might in some sense have degenerated; and, a sadder truth than that, it had become polluted in expression, and debased in motive and design. But the real character of the writer was little altered from the time when he was the idol of the public; nor was it ever perhaps stamped with immorality so gross, as when the faults of the illustrious poet and his sins too were most cordially forgiven.

The great flow and the great ebb of Byron's popularity may now be said to have both alike passed away. There is no illusion now in the pathos, the beauty, or the power of his poetry to blind us to the real character of the man. The magic spell being now broken, we

can look with disenchanted eyes upon all that is left of this noble genius, this unhappy man. As calm observers walking on that solemn shore which forms the boundary betwixt time and eternity, we can calculate how and where he trod by what remains of his

"Foot-prints on the sands of life."

And what are they? Instead of attempting to answer this question, let us look for a moment at those promises of childhood which, in the case of Lord Byron, it is no want of charity to say were blasted in the bud, or withered and destroyed by the absence of all judicious culture and genial nourishment.

If ever there was a case in which hereditary influences, arising out of impulses, passions, and habits of life, could excuse eccentricities of character and extremes of conduct, this excuse might be pleaded for Byron, as having descended from a line of ancestry disturbed on both sides by everything most calculated to destroy all harmony of character, all social concord, and all individual happiness.

Had these influences been confined only to the father's side, a tender, judicious, and high-principled mother might have done much to counteract the evil —might have done everything, it seems to us now, with such a child as Byron, who in his early years was always more amenable to female influence than to any other. Even his tutors soon discovered that he might be led by a silken cord, where a cable would fail to move him, and throughout his whole life it seemed necessary that to attract him forcibly in any direction there should be some mingling of affection with the motives by which he was swayed.

Moore, in his faithful biography of Byron, speaks of him again and again as being naturally shy, even to the end of his life. This natural shyness is one of the qualities which in an especial manner throw a boy upon the kindness and companionship of women. Much as those who are by nature destitute of shyness may amuse themselves by laughing at its various manifestations in others, there are few tendencies of feeling which occasion more real suffering, especially when accompanied, as shyness so often is, by an extraordinary amount of sensitiveness. Shyness or diffidence—for we use these words almost indiscriminately—is generally attributed to a low estimate of ourselves or our performances. It might, however, be much more justly attributed to a high estimate of what we should like to be, and to do; and with this an extreme anxiety about the opinion of others as to whether we approach near this standard, or fall far below it.

These tendencies of feeling are evidently such as lay the heart bare to a thousand impressions of pleasure or pain—of exultation or despondency—of hope or disappointment, from which less sensitive natures are exempt. And when these exist in excess, and with them is allied a quick appreciation of tenderness or cruelty, with a capability—nay, an absolute necessity, of loving, what is to become of one whose nature is thus constituted, if there should be no gentle woman's hand to smoothe the ruffled plumes of vanity, no woman's voice to speak of wisdom or peace, no woman's tears to bathe the wounded soul?

In the finely constituted nature of Byron these

tendencies and capabilities were developed early, and to an extraordinary extent. His young heart seems to have been oppressed with this necessity of loving. He would undoubtedly have loved his mother, had that been possible ; and he did love her for some time, in a certain way. Few women have ever cast from them more than Lord Byron's mother threw away when she neglected the means by which the affection of her son and only child might have been secured. It is appalling to think of the awful wreck which might, in great measure, be charged upon her carelessness ; only that suspicions of her sanity occur to palliate the crime. Besides which, she might herself have been no better trained ; and thus she might never be aware of what was required at her hands, nor of the mischief she was really doing.

It is not to pass censure upon this poor lady individually, that these remarks are offered : far from it. She was herself in that most pitiable position of having been married for her money, and seeing it all squandered away, without love or even gratitude on the part of her husband. A passionate, ungoverned, ill-educated, ignorant woman, possessing all the pride of rank, without personal dignity to support it, and all the ambition of distinction without the talent or the taste to render it illustrious ; what was a boy of fine susceptibilities and quick perceptions to do with such a mother, but despise her ? And this he did in time, though struggling long under his own great burden of love, to lay at least some part of it upon his mother's heart.

We do not hear that Byron's mother was wanting

in fondness,—in fitful, capricious fondness, alternating with anger as capricious—perverse and stupid fondness, interfering always with his advancement—ambitious fondness, eager to see her son a titled lord, without securing for him any worthier title. How was the young poet to love such a woman? Above all, how was he to revere her?

This lady, whose chief, but most unfortunate attraction, was that of being the possessor of large estates in Scotland, was Catherine Gordon, only child of George Gordon of Gight. She was second wife to the poet's father, married to him in the year 1785, and having been chosen solely for the sake of her property, she had the satisfaction of answering the end desired, so far as to witness the sale of her estates for the payment of her husband's debts, and then, scarcely three years after her marriage, retiring with her only child upon a pittance of £150 per annum. Surely a lady thus circumstanced might be pardoned a few eccentricities of temper; the only thing to be regretted is, that her violence failed to reach its appropriate object.

George Gordon Byron, the poet, was born in London, on the 22nd of January, 1788. His parents, not long afterwards, took up their abode in Aberdeen, from whence the father coolly and heartlessly withdrew himself, after all hope had ceased of being able to extract more money from his wife's impoverished means. His death took place about three years afterwards, and Mrs. Byron was then left with the entire responsibility of the child, as she had already been with all the charge of his maintenance. It is said, that even to the last

this unfortunate lady retained a warm affection for her husband, with whom, however, she had seldom lived in the enjoyment of much happiness or peace. Her affections, perhaps, were not of a nature to produce peace, either for herself or others, for she seems to have been one of those little-minded, hot-tempered women, who enjoy the *power* of inflicting pain, because they have no other.

In this manner Mrs. Byron soon began to torture the sensitive boy, whose happiness for awhile remained in her keeping. As an ignorant woman, she might be unconscious of the mischief she was doing. Herein lies her only excuse. But one is apt to think that the most foolish mother must know by the instinct of nature what is most likely to give pain to her child; and nothing can be more dangerous to a sensitive nature than for ridicule or scorn to be used as weapons of offence in the hands of those who are bound both by the laws of God and nature to be the ministers of all kindly, soothing, and genial influences.

"Worm-like 'twas trampled: adder-like avenged."

No line that Byron ever wrote expresses more strongly the sensations which naturally take place in a wounded mind under these circumstances; and many after-allusions to his mother, when conversing with his friends, disclose but too clearly how his feelings had been lacerated in early youth by her unguarded touch. Especially on that painful and humiliating subject, his lameness, he had been most deeply wounded. Alluding to this many years afterwards, and pointing to his lame foot, he said to a friend,—"Look there! It is to her

false delicacy at my birth I owe that deformity; and yet as long as I can remember she has never ceased to taunt and reproach me with it. Even a few days before we parted, for the last time, on my leaving England, she, in one of her fits of passion, uttered an imprecation upon me, praying that I might prove as ill-formed in mind as I was in body!" "His look," says his biographer, "in relating this frightful circumstance, can be conceived only by those who have seen him in a similar state of excitement."

Such was the mother to whose entire charge the early training of this unfortunate but highly-gifted child was committed; and there is nothing more affecting in all the melancholy record which contains the life of Byron, than those evidences of a better nature by which his childhood was so clearly marked. His tendency to love was one of these: not merely to *be loved*—that was quite a different matter—but actually to *love*, so that his little heart overflowed with affection to his very nurses,—kind Scottish women, most probably of good sense and good principle, one of whom used to amuse him with stories and legends while applying those distressing means which had to be used on account of his twisted foot; and then to beguile him of his pain she used to sing him to sleep. To this faithful woman he owed much of his familiar acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, acquired while still a child; and to this he afterwards alluded as having produced impressions of a nature which can only be made in very early years.

The sister of this woman, Mary Gray, remained with the family until Byron was old enough to be placed at

Harrow; and as a proof of that kindly feeling towards his dependants, for which the poet was through life so remarkable, Moore relates of him, that in parting with Mary Gray, "he presented her with his watch, the first of which he had ever been possessor. This watch the faithful nurse preserved fondly through life. . . . The affectionate boy also presented her with a full-length miniature of himself. . . . The same thoughtful gratitude was evinced by Byron towards the sister of this woman, his first nurse (she who used to sing him to sleep), to whom he wrote, some years after he left Scotland, in the most cordial terms, making inquiries of her welfare, and informing her, with much joy, that he had at last got his foot so much restored as to put on a common boot—an event which he had long anxiously wished, and which he was sure would give her much pleasure."

Mrs. Byron's part in the training and education of her son has either been ignored by his biographer, or it consisted almost entirely in alternate fits of tenderness and passion—in lavishing upon him at one moment the fondest caresses, and heaping upon him at another the most virulent abuse. It is true she took him to a celebrated fortune-teller, to inquire about his future destiny; and it is said of her, that even at a time when there was little prospect of his inheriting the title and property of his family, she held by a sort of presentiment that he would become distinguished in some way or other; but as the boy grew in years, he must have learned to attach little importance to her opinion on any subject. Indeed, such was his natural quickness of perception with regard to things con-

temptible or ridiculous, that his mother soon became to him a subject for momentary amusement, and nothing more.

It is remarkable in the growth of Byron's character how little he was ever brought into contact with female society above the rank of his nurses. To this may, in some measure, be attributed those ardent friendships which he was so prone to form both at school and college, and which contributed so largely to his enjoyments. Something he must love. It was a positive craving of his nature to love; and finding so often that those upon whom he bestowed his youthful affections had either happier or more congenial homes, and so did not need, like him, to look abroad for sympathy and tenderness, or that they could be better satisfied than he was with intellectual pursuits alone, his feelings seemed to flow back upon himself, laden with bitterness and disappointment, driving him for very sustenance to that condition which Shelley has described as

"Eating the bitter core of his own heart."

But the great object of regret with regard to Byron is that religion—true, sound scriptural religion—found no place beneath his mother's roof. Had she been faithful here, how different might have been the result! The tutors, under whose care the young poet was first taught the rudiments of education, bear testimony to his character at that time as a boy who might be supposed the especial object of attraction and deep interest to a thoughtful mother. More than one had to impart instruction to him while under

intense suffering, from causes already alluded to. "He was often, during these lessons," says one of them, "in violent pain, from the torturing position in which his foot was kept." And Mr. Rogers one day said to him, "It makes me uncomfortable, my Lord, to see you sitting there in such pain as I know you must be suffering." "Never mind, Mr. Rogers," answered the boy, "you shall not see any signs of it in *me*."

Another gentleman—Dr. Glennie, to whose care Byron was for some time committed—says of him: "I found him enter upon his tasks with alacrity and success. He was playful, good-humoured, and beloved by his companions. His reading in history and poetry was far beyond the usual standard of his age, and in my study he found many books open to him, both to please his taste and gratify his curiosity; among others, a set of our poets from Chaucer to Churchill, which, I am tempted to say, he had more than once perused from beginning to end. He showed at this age an intimate acquaintance with the historical parts of the Holy Scriptures, upon which he seemed delighted to converse with me, especially after our religious exercises on a Sunday evening, when he would reason upon the facts contained in the sacred volume, with every appearance of belief in the divine truths which they unfold. That the impressions thus imbibed in his boyhood had, notwithstanding the irregularities of his after-life, sunk deep into his mind, will appear, I think, to every impartial reader of his works in general; and I have never been able to divest myself of the persuasion that, in the strange aberrations which so unfortunately marked his subsequent

career, he must have found it difficult to violate the better principles early instilled into him. It should have been mentioned, among the traits which I have recorded of his still earlier years, that, according to the character given of him by his first nurse's husband, he was, when a mere child, particularly inquisitive and puzzling about religion."*

During the course of Byron's early education, the efforts of his teachers were continually frustrated by the ill-judged interference of his mother. Indeed, she not only imparted little good to him herself, but was so blind to his true interests as to manage to drive away from him those who might have done him good in every sense of the word. Lord Carlisle, to whom, as a relative, his guardianship was committed, withdrew in a great measure from the duty, disgusted with the mother's foolish and inconsistent treatment of her son. On being remonstrated with on one occasion, while Byron was under Dr. Glennie's care, her passion was so violent as to reach the ears of the doctor's other pupils, in consequence of which one of them said to the boy, "Byron, your mother is a fool." "I know it," he answered gloomily. And well he might answer gloomily; though at that age he could form no true estimate of the calamitous consequences almost sure to follow the first discovery of a boy that his "mother is a fool." No wonder that Lord Carlisle at length ceased to have any intercourse with the mother of such a ward, and that towards the ward himself he should extend but little cordiality.

Amongst those many characteristics of Byron's early

* Moore's Life of Byron.

youth, which tend to confirm the belief that he would have been in a more than ordinary manner open to favourable impressions received from a mother, is that recorded by his biographer, in speaking of which he says: "Of the tenaciousness with which he clung to all the impressions of his youth, there can be no stronger proof than the very interesting fact, that while so little of his own boyish correspondence has been preserved, there were found among his papers almost all the notes and letters which his principal school favourites, even the youngest, had ever addressed to him; and in some cases, where the youthful writers had omitted to date their scrawls, his faithful memory had, at an interval of years after, supplied the deficiency." "My school friendships," said Byron, "were *passions*." And what a picture is this of the depth and sincerity of his affections, while yet untainted by the vices of maturer life!

Even later in life, Lord Byron's friendships were marked by something like the romance of love. It was no mere overflow of sentiment with him, but a deep, sincere, and earnest feeling; such as is destined but seldom to meet with any adequate return. On first preparing to leave England to pursue his travels in the East, he set his heart upon having a portrait painted of each of his best loved and most intimate friends; and terrible was the indignation with which he received the excuse of one of these gentlemen—that he was engaged in shopping with ladies! The very ardour of his enthusiasm must indeed have subjected him to many a bitter disappointment. Misgivings with regard to the reality of such attachments,

or rather their power to excite a similar feeling in others, seemed to have haunted him through the course of his travels; and he complains continually of not hearing from his friends. On one occasion he writes: "I have really no friends in the world; though all my old school companions are gone forth into that world, and walk about there in monstrous disguises, in the garb of guardsmen, lawyers, parsons, fine gentlemen, and such other masquerade dresses. So I here shake hands and cut with all these busy people, none of whom write to me. Indeed I ask it not!"

But he did ask it, in the secret of his heart, and a great deal besides, for he was perpetually demanding earthly love to supply that hungry craving of the soul, for which it has never yet been found sufficient, and would have been less so in his case than many. "A disposition on his side to form strong attachments, and a yearning desire after affection in return, were the feeling and the want that formed the dream and the torment of his existence." After these words, his biographer goes on to say,—"It is much, I own, to be questioned whether, even under the most favourable circumstances, a disposition such as Byron's could have escaped ultimate disappointment, or found anywhere a resting-place for its imaginings and desires. But, in his case, disappointment met him on the very threshold of life. His mother, to whom his affections first, naturally with ardour, turned, either repelled them rudely, or capriciously trifled with them. In speaking of his early days to a friend at Genoa, a short time before his departure for Greece, he traced the first feelings of pain and humiliation he had ever

known to the coldness with which his mother had received his caresses in infancy, and the frequent reflections on his personal deformity with which she had wounded him.

Again, in speaking of Byron's early effusions, which had fallen under the merciless lash of the 'Edinburgh Review,' Moore says of them—"There is, indeed, one point of view in which these productions are deeply and intrinsically interesting. As faithful reflections of his character at that period of life, they enable us to judge of what he was in his yet unadulterated state,—before disappointment had begun to embitter his ardent spirit, or the stirring up of the energies of his nature had brought into activity also its defects. Tracing him thus through these natural effusions of his young genius, we find him pictured exactly such, in all the features of his character, as every anecdote of his boyish days proves him really to have been,—proud, daring, and passionate, resentful of slight or injustice, but still more so in the cause of others than his own; and yet with all his vehemence, docile and placable at the least touch of a hand authorized to guide him. The affectionateness indeed of his disposition, traceable as it is through every page of this volume, is yet but faintly done justice to, even by himself; his whole youth being, from earliest childhood, a series of the most passionate attachments, of those overflowings of the soul, both in friendship and love, which are still more rarely responded to than felt, and which, when checked or sent back upon the heart, are sure to turn into bitterness."

The first apparent effect of Mrs. Byron's violence

and folly was that of driving her son away from her; the next, that of exciting his defiance. It was impossible for such a mother to retain any authority over such a son; and whatever influence might have been derived from natural affection, was destroyed by her own mismanagement, caprice, and temper. It is easy to say of Byron that he possessed by nature those elements of character which would have made him rebel under any authority. But his biographer has shown that this was far from being the case when he was treated with candour and justice. As, for instance, when a friend whom he highly valued remonstrated with him upon some objectionable verses printed in a collection of his earliest poetry, the remonstrance was immediately replied to by Byron, stating frankly that "he felt fully the justice of his reverend friend's censure, and that rather than allow the poem in question to be circulated, he would instantly recall all the copies that had been sent out, and cancel the whole impression. On the very same evening this prompt sacrifice was carried into effect."*

If Byron's mother had not possessed talents equal to sharing in the intellectual pursuits of her son, though from his letters to her no evidence of such inferiority is apparent, there is still open to her that higher range of influence which is more important in the formation of character than any branch of mere scholastic attainment can be. It is in fact a woman's legitimate calling, and especially a mother's, to impart sound, rational, and just views of human conduct; to explain motives, to point out results, to show how

* Moore's Life of Byron.

that impulsive power which prompts to the most trifling act either of good or evil may be identical with those great moral principles which lie at the base of the most exalted virtue, or the meanest vice.

With these fundamental principles of conduct and elements of character, a woman even of ordinary talent may be so conversant, her perceptions may be so clear, and her moral sense so true, that if she cannot instruct her boy in the lessons of the schools, she may teach him much that he will have to learn in after-association with his fellow-men, and much that will be of infinite importance to him when he meets them on the field of action and measures his strength with theirs.

Indeed, it would be impossible to set limits either to the extent or the value of that wisdom which a mother may impart to her son before he enters upon independent life; and especially while he is passing through that transition state from which so many ways diverge—from which too so many, to all appearance innocent at first, lead downwards into depths that no mother's eye would seek to penetrate. But if the mother shrinks from knowing to what such downward paths may lead, she ought to know, and often does know, what marks their commencement as being false in promise, and fatal in experiment. Thus, with their quick sense of right and wrong, women often can discriminate more clearly than men between the upward and the downward tendency of those steps which youth takes first with hesitation, but afterwards with boldness and resolution, so that no mother's hand can draw him back should the opportunity of early decision have been neglected.

In all probability there never was a youth who entered upon life with less of this kind of guardianship than Byron, and who at the same time needed it so much. With the results, as exhibited in his after career, we have nothing further to do. The history of Byron's short but eventful life is too generally known; and as his mother's death took place when he had only reached the age of twenty-three, all further comment upon his character is unnecessary here beyond what relates to his intercourse with her.

The letters of Lord Byron to his mother during his first absence of two years from England, are respectful, though scarcely to be called affectionate. They abound, however, in proofs of solicitude for her personal comfort, such as assuring her of a permanent residence at Newstead, and even setting her mind at rest with regard to her provision for the future in case of his death. But the most amiable and attractive feature of these letters is, the constant care which they evince on the part of the writer to ensure the happiness of his domestics, and especially some faithful servants to whom he constantly sends messages of kindness, remembering them with the most tender and undisguised affection. Amongst these, one in particular, old Joe Murray, is often mentioned with that true-hearted sincerity of feeling which was Byron's most redeeming quality, and which we must regret to lose sight of when that tone of banter and sarcasm, which he subsequently assumed, effaced so much of what was worthy of admiration both in himself and others.

Lord Byron had reached England on his return from Greece, and was only delayed by unavoidable

engagements in London, when he heard of his mother's illness and almost sudden death at Newstead, where she had resided during his absence. It is said that while her son was away she was more devoted to his interests than when near; and possibly the exemption from close personal irritation did much to soften and conciliate on both sides. At all events the shock to Byron was severe, when, preparing with all haste to join his mother, he received the intelligence of her death. He was not so rich in friends that he could well afford to lose even such a mother. His feelings are best described by his own words in a letter to a friend. "My poor mother died yesterday! and I am on my way from town to attend her to the family vault. I heard *one* day of her illness, the *next* of her death. Thank God, her last moments were most tranquil. I am told she was in little pain, and not aware of her situation. I now feel the truth of Mr. Gray's observation,—'That we can only have *one* mother.' Peace be with her!"

The following observations are from Moore's Life of Byron:—"It can hardly have escaped the observation of the reader, that the general tone of the noble poet's correspondence with his mother is that of a son performing, strictly and conscientiously, what he deems to be his duty, without the intermixture of any sentiment of cordiality to sweeten the task. . . . That such should have been his disposition towards such a parent, can be matter neither of surprise nor blame; but that, notwithstanding this alienation, which her unfortunate temper produced, he should have continued to consult her wishes, and minister to her com-

forts, with such unfailing thoughtfulness as is evinced, not only in the frequency of his letters, but in the almost exclusive appropriation of Newstead to her use, redounds assuredly in no ordinary degree to his honour; and was even the most strikingly meritorious from the absence of that affection which renders kindness to a beloved object little more than an indulgence of self.

"But however estranged from her his feelings must be allowed to have been while she lived, her death seems to have restored them into their natural channel. Whether from a return of early fondness, and the all-atoning power of the grave, or from the prospect of that void in his future life which this loss of his only link with the past would leave, it is certain that Byron felt the death of his mother acutely, if not deeply. . . .

"That, notwithstanding her injudicious and coarse treatment of him, Mrs. Byron loved her son with that sort of fitful fondness of which alone such a nature is capable, there can be little doubt, and still less that she was ambitiously proud of him. Her anxiety for the success of his first literary essays may be collected from the pains which he so considerately took to tranquillize her on the appearance of the hostile article in the Review. As his fame began to brighten, that notion of his future greatness and glory, which, by a singular forecast of superstition, she had entertained from his very childhood, became proportionately confirmed. Every mention of him in print was watched by her with eagerness; and she had got bound together in a volume a collection of all the literary notices that had then appeared of his early poems and satires, written over

on the margin with observations of her own, which to my informant appeared indicative of much more sense and ability than, from her general character, we should be inclined to attribute to her."

It is but just to mention these simple but still extenuating traits in the character of this most injudicious and unfortunate mother,—unfortunate, because she had committed to her charge an eccentric, impassioned, but yet noble nature, which she knew not how to preserve from the most melancholy fate of genius—that of being a warning instead of a blessing to mankind.

XIII.

THE MOTHERS OF GOETHE AND RICHTER.

AMONGST the many German mothers who might be described as influential in forming to some extent the characters of men of eminence,—some by their virtues, others by their talents, and not a few by both,—I have selected only the mothers of Goethe and Richter, as illustrating, though each in a manner differing widely from the other, a certain amount of influence over the extraordinary men in connection with whom their names have become known to us.

The mother of Goethe, or *Frau Aja*, as she was generally called, might not inappropriately serve the purpose of showing the effect of hereditary transmission of certain properties or tendencies of character. Lewes, in his Life of Goethe, says, in comparing the mother with the father, that "she was more like what we conceive as the parent of a poet. She is one of the pleasantest figures in German literature, and one standing out with greater vividness than almost any other. Her simple, hearty, joyous, and affectionate nature endeared her to all. She was the delight of children, the favourite of poets and princes. To the last retaining her enthu-

siasm and simplicity, mingled with great shrewdness and knowledge of character, *Frau Aja* was at once grave and hearty, dignified and simple. She had read most of the best German and Italian authors, had picked up considerable desultory information, and had that 'mother-wit' which so often seems to render culture superfluous in women, their rapid intuitions anticipating the tardy conclusions of experience—a characteristic also of the poetic mind. Her letters are full of spirit. . . .

"After a lengthened interview with her, an enthusiastic traveller exclaimed—'Now do I understand how Goethe has become the man he is!' . . . She was married at seventeen to a man for whom she had no love, and was only eighteen when the poet was born. This, instead of making her prematurely old, seems to have perpetuated her girlhood. 'I and my Wolfgang,' she said, 'have always held fast to each other, because we were both young together.' To him she transmitted her love of story-telling, her animal spirits, her love of everything which bore the stamp of distinctive individuality, and her love of seeing happy faces around her. 'Order and quiet,' she says in one of her charming letters, 'are my principal characteristics. Hence I despatch at once whatever I have to do, the most disagreeable always first. . . . When all has returned to its proper state, then I defy any one to surpass me in good humour.' Her heartiness and tolerance she thinks are the causes why every one likes her. 'I am fond of people, and *that* every one feels directly, young and old. I pass without presumption through the world, and that gratifies men. I never *bemoralize* any one, always seek out the good that is in them,

and leave what is bad to Him who made mankind, and knows how to round off the angles. In this way I make myself happy and comfortable.' Who does not recognize the son in these accents? The kindliest of men inherited his loving, happy nature from the heartiest of women."

But while the cheerful, light-hearted mother went about like a bird in the otherwise silent and somewhat gloomy house of her husband—for he was a man of very different temper—like a bird with its song of gladness, inspiring happier thoughts than it knows how to express—she seems to have had the art to inspire also those wild vagaries of imagination which form so striking a feature in the higher and more systematic productions of her son. In her own charming way, she describes her mode of entertaining her children, and we see at once how an ardent nature like that of Goethe must have listened, and drunk in the music of her words. Her faculty of story-telling was equally delightful to mother and child. "Air, fire, and water," she says, "I represented under the forms of princesses; and to all natural phenomena I gave a meaning, in which I almost believed more fervently than my little hearers. As we thought of paths which led from star to star, and that we should one day inhabit the stars, and thought of the great spirits we should meet there, I was as eager for the hours of story-telling as the children themselves; I was quite curious about the future course of my own improvisation, and any invitation which interrupted these evenings was disagreeable. There I sat, and there Wolfgang held me with his large black eyes; and when the fate of one of his favourites

was not according to his fancy, I saw the angry veins swell in his temples, I saw him repress his tears. . . . And when I made a pause for the night, promising to continue it on the morrow, I was certain that he would in the meanwhile think it out for himself; and so he often stimulated my imagination. When I turned the story according to his plan, and told him that he had found out the *dénouement*, then was he all fire and flame, and one could see his little heart beating underneath his dress. His grandmother, who made a great pet of him, was the confidante of all his ideas as to how the story would turn out, and as she repeated these to me, and I turned the story according to these hints, there was a little diplomatic secrecy between us, which I never disclosed. I had the pleasure of continuing my story to the delight and astonishment of my hearers, and Wolfgang saw with glowing eyes the fulfilment of his own conceptions, and listened with enthusiastic applause."

The same kind and partial grandmother was the means of introducing many kinds of amusement into the house, as well as such little indulgences as seem to constitute, in the eyes of children, the great charm of these venerable relatives. Amongst other pleasant additions to their household enjoyment, this lady gave the children a puppet-show, as an agreeable surprise, one Christmas-eve, and endless were the variations played upon this incomparable instrument by Goethe, who describes it as having "created quite a new world in their house."

With his sister, to whom he was faithfully attached and with whom he shared every amusement; with his

light-hearted, playful, and imaginative mother; and with his puppet-show, Goethe was better able than he would otherwise have been to endure the sterner discipline of his father, upon whom the great portion of his early education devolved, until the genius of the precocious child required more systematic training. But the mother was always the point of attraction to which the youth returned with unabated interest and delight; nor was the sister forgotten in his happiest and most congenial employments; for Goethe, like all men of true genius, seems to have required, as an absolute necessity of his nature, the society of sensible and sensitive women. In return, he was himself but too readily and too well beloved by them; as, indeed, is always the case with genius; for woman's love seems ever to tend, like the moth, to the flame, and, alas! how often with the same result!

An anecdote, related by his mother, gives us an amusing picture of him parading before Max. "The morning was bright and frosty. Wolfgang burst into the room where his mother was seated with some friends. 'Mother, you have never seen me skate, and the weather is so beautiful today.' I put on my crimson fur cloak, which had a long train, and was closed in front by golden clasps, and we drove out. There skated my son, like an arrow among the groups. The wind had reddened his cheeks, and blown the powder out of his brown hair. When he saw my crimson cloak, he came towards our carriage, and smiled coaxingly at me. 'Well,' said I, 'what do you want?'—'Come, mother; you can't be cold in the carriage: give me your cloak.'—'You won't put it on,

will you ?'—'Certainly.' I took it off; he put it on, threw the train over his arm, and away he went over the ice like a son of the gods. Oh, Bettina, if you could have seen him! Anything so beautiful is not to be seen now! I clapped my hands for joy. Never shall I forget him, as he darted out from under one arch of the bridge, and in again under the other, the wind carrying the train behind him as he flew!" *

Truly these little traits of affectionate intercourse between the mother and son might seem trifling enough, did we not know how much they have to do with nurturing those elements of character which mark the man in after-life. The mother believed that all this display of beauty and grace in her son—for he was a celebrated skater—was to please her partial eye; and she accepted this acknowledgment of regard for her taste, as well as her love, as one of her proudest triumphs.

But in matters of more importance than the mere display of his own personal beauty and grace, Goethe was always true to his mother, and solicitous to pay her every mark of respect. Indeed, she was by no means a woman for any man—not even so great a genius as Goethe—to be ashamed of; for, besides her accomplishments as a lady of good education, she must have possessed gifts of her own, almost amounting to genius; and all accompanied with a peculiar brilliancy and fascination, which rendered her society and correspondence agreeable to many of those celebrated characters, with whose friendship her son was so highly favoured. It was not his misfortune to be ever

* Life of Goethe, by G. H. Lewes.

ashamed of his mother. He seems rather to have felt a sort of filial pride in directing the kind attentions of his distinguished friends to his mother, and with many of these she maintained a spirited and lively correspondence.

With the same quickness and vivacity of feeling with which the mother of Goethe entered into all the enjoyments, and even anticipated the honours of her son, she listened to all which concerned his happiness or welfare; taking alarm at every report which awakened anxiety respecting his health. On one of these occasions he writes to her from Weimar:—" I am, after my manner, tolerably well, am able to do all my work, to enjoy the intercourse of good friends, and still find time enough for all my favourite pursuits. I could not wish myself in a better place, now that I know the world, and how it looks behind the mountains. And you, on your side, content yourself with my existence, and should I quit the world before you, I have not lived to your shame; I leave behind me a good name, and good friends, and thus you will have the satisfaction of knowing that I *am not entirely dead.* Meanwhile, live in peace; fate may yet give us a pleasant old age, which we will also live through gratefully."

But while dwelling upon the close intimacy and affection which existed between Goethe and his mother, it is not with any idea that she was a woman who could possibly share in that higher range of intellect for which her son was distinguished. On this part of his character, it would be little less than presumption to offer any comment here; and still more so to

attempt to unravel those closely woven threads, by which the various and sometimes strangely discordant attributes of his mysterious being were combined so as to present to his admirers an almost perfect whole; while those who remain beyond the fascination of personal intercourse can only wonder, and stand aloof, as from some grand phenomenon, more calculated to awaken terror than to invite approach.

It is with the more familiar *humanities* of this phenomenon that the mother is so constantly associated; and thus, in the midst of the applause which mankind accorded to the successful display of Goethe's extraordinary powers; while startling the world with creations at once lovely, strange, and terrible, and throwing over all that fantastic drollery which seemed to convert his grandest conceptions into farce, we turn, with a pleasure heightened by contrast, to those remembrances of his childhood, which place the mighty genius before us as a man endowed with social and relative affections in which all may share.

When at the summit of his fame, and in the midst of circumstances the most important and perplexing, Goethe on one occasion found accidentally a lost letter from his mother. "It reminded me," he says, "in a strange manner, of many peaceful passages of my youth, and circumstances connected with my family and native town. . . . I was taken by surprise, and thrown back upon myself; a thousand images started up before me. . . . As a sick person or prisoner forgets for the moment his pains and troubles, whilst listening to some tale which is related to him, so was I also carried back to other spheres and other times."

Goethe then draws a picture of one of the most familiar scenes of his boyhood, in which he visits a well-known garden, and sees again his venerated grandfather amongst his flowers and fruit; he retraces in connection with this spectacle his own ambitious projects, while yet a boy; and then, with the same secret self-satisfaction which seems to have accompanied him through life, concludes with considerable complacency by recounting the steps which had led him up to the summit of his fame.

Even in this little episode, simple as it is, we discern the leading features of Goethe's character; and it would be doing but little justice to the great realities of life, to the *moral* purposes of man's existence, did we close these remarks without one word of regret that along with the grandest conceptions of genius, the purest and holiest attributes of being were not more conspicuous both in Goethe's character and in his works. The mother might justly boast that she did not *bemoralize* people. If she had been solicitous to inspire in her son a true reverence for strict morality, it would have been better for him and for the many admirers whom he left behind. We are much struck with this want in reading his autobiography, written late in life, when the charm must have passed away from much which had constituted the delight of his youth. At such times, when, looking back, we perceive only the marks of deep and solid footprints, and feel only what has done us essential good or harm, it is usual to remember with something more than ordinary affection the mother who has pointed out the way of right, and strictly walked in it herself. Goethe

does not appear to have remembered his mother in this way at all, but rather as the skilful manager of difficult tempers and circumstances, the proud admirer of himself, and always the charming woman.

The question then arises, What might this extraordinary and gifted man have been, had his mother, with all her amiable qualities, been a woman of high, sound moral principle? Such as she was, the son sincerely mourned her death, which took place in her seventy-eighth year. "To the last," says the biographer already quoted, "her love for her son, and his for her, had been the glory and sustainment of her happy old age. He had wished her to come and live with him at Weimar; but the circle of old Frankfurt friends, and the influence of old habits, kept her in her native city, where she was venerated by all."

There is something peculiarly touching, though far inferior in dignity and importance, in the manner in which the mother's humble life is recalled by another German writer, who has left on record these memorable words:—"To the man who has had a mother, all women are sacred for her sake." It does not appear, however, that the man who wrote and *felt* thus was much indebted to his mother, except for inspiring in his heart a peculiar tenderness which constituted one of the most striking amongst the many amiable features of his character. The very *pity* which Jean Paul Richter felt for his mother in her hard and patient struggles against straitened means, is so feelingly described by him, that we are left under no doubt as to the beneficial influence which this must have exercised over his own habits and his own heart

And beautiful indeed is this arrangement of a wise and gracious Providence, by which the strongest natures are sometimes bound by silken cords, and compelled in a manner to do right by the very helplessness of the weakest.

Such was especially the case with Jean Paul, and it has been so with many men of good heart and feeling, that they would not act upon the principle of self-indulgence so far as to waste the scanty means for which the poor laborious wife or mother was toiling in her humble home.

Whatever might be the disadvantages with which Jean Paul had to contend, and they were many, he entered upon life under the blessed auspices of that inestimable privilege,—a happy childhood! Much as he owed to his father for this happiness, it cannot be supposed that in the worthy pastor's home the mother did not contribute her share, and a large one too, to the general good feeling and even good principle which prevailed within and around their dwelling. Richter's own account of his peaceful rural home, and especially of his father's character, are inimitably touching and beautiful to those who know how much the simple circumstances of hidden life may sometimes contribute to form a genial soil for the growth of every virtue. But we must again observe, as a prelude to this description, that, as in so many other instances of poetic development, music constituted not only one of the most intense enjoyments of the boy, but was shared with the father, who himself understood and felt the influence of music in no common measure. "To music," says Jean Paul, "was

my soul, like my father's, everywhere open, and had for it a hundred Argus ears."

Life began with the little family beneath the pastor's roof, "under a pure heaven." "The morning sparkled with the undried dew, when I carried his coffee to my father in the pastor's garden, lying outside the village, where, in a small pleasure-house, open on every side, he committed his sermon to memory. In the evening our mother brought us, for our second meal, the salad prepared by herself, and currants and raspberries from the garden. It belongs to the unacknowledged country pleasures, that of being able to sup in the evenings without kindling a light. After we had enjoyed this, the father seated himself with his pipe in the open air; that is, in the walled court of the parsonage, and I and my brother sprang about in our night-gowns in the fresh evening air, as freely as the crossing swallows above us. We flew nimbly here and there, till, like them, we bore us orderly to our nests."

While recalling these simple pleasures, Jean Paul describes the season of spring as dwelling essentially in the heart. "It is merely necessary," he says, "in villages to draw away the curtain of snow from the earth for its joys to begin. The city has its pleasures only in the winter; ploughing and sowing are a countryman's pleasure-harvest, and for a pastor who does his own farming, they open new scenes to his secluded sons." Then, he goes on to say, the children were emancipated, sowing, planting, or making hay, while the father stood by and helped. . . . But, he adds, with evident pride in the noble character of the pastor.

"My father did not stand by the field-labourers as a task-master (although they were feudal tenants), but as a friendly shepherd of souls, that would take part at the same time with nature and with his spiritual children."

But so numerous are these simple pleasures, all described with such minuteness of detail, yet with so much of poetic feeling, that it would be impossible here to pursue the flowery and attractive path by which this writer knew so well how to conduct his readers,—the more readily and the more happily on their part, because with the beauty of the description there is evidently so large an amount of innocent enjoyment on his.

Dark days, however, come even to this rural home, and the whole picture is overshadowed by the father's death. Then scanty means ensue, and the poor mother sits spinning through half the night, nursing her anxious cares in solitude and silence. It is impossible for Jean Paul to remain with his mother; he has his studies to pursue, and when he makes his appearance amongst the students, it is in a coat of antique form and curious structure, evidently the work of the poor mother's hands; but, wonderful for a youth of his age, he cares less for the laughter of his companions than for the mother's scanty purse, and no amount of ridicule on their part, no longing on his for such pleasures as the young men around him enjoy, can induce him to gratify himself at any unwarrantable expense on the part of his mother.

A proud and happy time, however, was in store for Jean Paul, when, instead of drawing from his mother's

scanty means, he should be able to pay back into the treasury the fruits of his own industry. After many unsuccessful attempts, he accomplishes a work which meets with some success, and the first thing he does is to fly to his mother with the sum of money which was paid him for this work. Although responding with cordiality to the congratulations of his friends, "the whole fullness of his joy and success was poured out for his mother, who needed indeed this balsam of filial love. The moment he received the thirty ducats, he set out to walk from Schwartzenbach to Hof, where his mother then lived. On the way, by the light of the stars, he thought of his mother's astonishment, her joy, and her pious gratitude to Heaven, and entering late at night the low apartment where she sate spinning by the light of the fire, he poured the whole golden treasure into her lap!"

THE END.

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Collective
Bio of women
Smolkay
Bd. 1902